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EDITED BY

MORRIS JASTROW, JR., PH.D.

Professor of Semitic Languages in the University of Pennsylvania

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Handbooks on the History of Religions

THE RELIGION OF THE TEUTONS

BY

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PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LEIDEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH

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PREFACE

THE present volume may be allowed to plead its own cause; its plan and scope are explained in the Introduction. It is for critics to decide how far the author has succeeded in his task, and wherein he has failed. It is the hope of the author that his book may at all events prove useful in conveying some definite information on controverted points, the more so as the excellent work of F. B. Gummere on *Germanic Origins*, which is the only English work of a general character, covers for the greater part a different field.

I wish to express my gratitude to several scholars who have had considerable share in the production of this book. Without the repeated and earnest solicitation and the encouragement received from Professor Morris Jastrow, Jr., of the University of Pennsylvania, this book would not have been written. Its appearance in English is due to Professor B. J. Vos of the Johns Hopkins University, who, in view of his own deep interest in the subject, was especially qualified to undertake the translation. The first eleven chapters — also published in Dutch — have been carefully revised by Professor B. Symons of the University of Groningen, who has read the proof sheets with the keen eye of the specialist, and whose numerous suggestions have frequently proved of value in controlling and correcting my own views.

In the chapters devoted to mythology my obligations are less direct. I have, however, gratefully made use of the material collected in the latest and best works, and more especially of

the excellent sketch of Mogk in Paul's *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*. The general reader may, however, be assured that I have never accepted data without verification, and the scholar will observe that my conclusions frequently differ from those embodied in recent publications. It is my hope, also, that the historical method adopted in the work, and the endeavor to maintain a sharp distinction between what we actually know and what we do not know, may be esteemed advantages which will in a measure redeem other possible imperfections.

P. D. CHANTEPIE DE LA SAUSSAYE.

LEIDEN,
January, 1902.

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From O. Bremer, "Ethnographie der germanischen Stämme," in *Paul's Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*, by courtesy of Karl J. Trübner

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT TEUTONS

CHAPTER I. — INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND GENERAL PLAN

The country we live in and the blood in our veins constitute close and permanent ties of kinship between ourselves and the primitive Teutons. This applies without reservation to the German, Dutch, English, and Scandinavian peoples, in part also to the French, and, so far as descent is concerned, to the Americans of the United States as well. Though our religion is derived from the Jews, and our culture from the classical nations of antiquity, our natural origins are to be found among the ancient Teutons. If we are not their offspring in a spiritual sense, they are yet our ancestors after the flesh, from whom we have inherited, in large measure, our way of looking at things, as well as numerous ideas and customs.

It is therefore of vital interest to us to determine as accurately as possible what this inheritance consists of, in contradistinction to the foreign influences to which we have been subjected. Moreover, the present century has witnessed a revival of interest in the heroes and legends of the primitive Teutonic period. In modern literature the Norse gods and heroes, the German Nibelungs, have taken on a new lease of life. This world of myth and saga has a peculiar charm for

us, even though it has not been immortalized in masterpieces of art, as that of ancient Greece.

It is the aim of this volume to present a survey of our knowledge concerning Teutonic heathenism. The term employed for this purpose, "mythology," includes the myths and stories, as well as their scientific treatment. This double sense of the term, however, involves no real difficulty, any more than in the case of the term "history," to which the same objection might be made.

On the other hand, what would appear to be a more serious objection is the application of the term "mythology" to the whole of the heathen religion, inasmuch as neither cult nor religious institutions and observances, though connected with mythology, properly form a part of the concept myth. "History of religion" and "mythology" are by no means convertible terms; in the treatment of the more highly civilized peoples, whose religious life is known through their literature, it is essential to distinguish carefully between these two phases. But in the case of tribes and peoples that stand on a lower level of civilization, and concerning whom our knowledge is of a fragmentary character, there seems to be no valid objection against applying the term "mythology" to the entire field. While perhaps not strictly correct from a logical point of view, this usage has been so universally followed in the case of the Teutons, that we feel justified in adhering to it.

Teutonic mythology, therefore, comprises all that is known of the religion of the ancient Teutons, that is, the Germans, the Anglo-Saxons, the Scandinavians, the Gothic, and other East Teutonic peoples. The *terminus ad quem* of our treatment is the conversion of these peoples to Christianity, which did not take place in the North until about A.D. 1000. At the same time survivals of paganism among the Christianized Teutons in the Middle Ages and down to our own times, while not forming, in the strict sense of the word, a part of our subject, must necessarily be taken into consideration.

That mythology is an historical science may now be regarded as an established fact; and this implies that in its deductions it is absolutely confined to such data as have been definitely ascertained from records, and which, in addition to being weighed according to the canons of historical criticism, have been judged in connection with their origin and character. Difficult as such a task is, still greater obstacles are encountered when we attempt to combine these isolated facts and to construct a system of mythology from the material thus collected; for at this point we touch the apparently simple but in reality extremely complicated field of myth-interpretation. Nothing, indeed, is easier than to interpret mythical characters and stories in accordance with some clever *aperçu* or in keeping with certain stock ideas. In following such a system the elements that fit in with the interpretation are made use of, while the others are completely ignored and the gaps in the historical data entirely neglected. On the other hand, to comprehend in their unity and interrelations all the features of one myth, and all the myths concerning a particular god or hero, is always extremely difficult, and in many cases absolutely impossible. "To hit upon an idea is mere play; to follow it out to its logical conclusion is work; to fathom a mythological fact,—what shall we call that? You know the crowfoot weed that shoots out its tendrils in every direction? Wherever the spur of a runner touches the ground a new root rises up and a new plant, and in this way a large space is rapidly covered. The task of laying bare the complete ramifications of this weed on a large plot of ground, without injuring the least little fibre, furnishes a faint idea of the trial of patience involved in mythological investigations."[1]

The question also suggests itself whether the unity which we believe to have found really exists. We are liable to all sorts of misconceptions, we are apt to make hasty generalizations on

[1] H. Usener, *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, i (1889), p. xi.

the basis of what has been brought to the surface in some remote corner, to assume as popular belief what is merely the creation of a poet's fancy, and to consider primitive what is of recent date. Doubtless the very recognition of these dangers constitutes in a measure a safeguard, and the mass of material itself furnishes many indications of the way in which it is to be used; but still it is well never to lose sight of the limits of the attainable. We must perforce attempt to arrange and to comprehend the mythological material collected, but we should at the same time account to ourselves for every step taken, and justify in each particular instance our right to reconstruct and to join what lies scattered.

The same holds good in regard to the tracing of religious development. As with numerous other sciences, so with Teutonic mythology, the highest aim is to unfold its historical development. Now it is doubtless incumbent upon us to render an account of the changes which concepts, legends, and customs have undergone. On the other hand, whether these changes follow a single direction, whether we know them with sufficient completeness to enable us to describe them in their interdependence, whether, in a word, we can speak of development, these are questions, the answer to which requires in each case a separate investigation.

The above remarks would be out of place, if they did not tend to deny to Teutonic mythology this systematic unity and this uniform development. We shall, indeed, discover a certain kind of unity, such as is found among products of similar or identical soil, and shall be able to describe groups of phenomena and parallel phenomena. We shall likewise be able to point to changes that occur in the course of time. But development and the construction of a system will be neither our point of departure nor our final aim. On the contrary, we shall have to distinguish carefully between the several peoples and periods.

The plan of the work is in keeping with these considerations. So far as practicable the various subjects that form a part of Teutonic mythology will be brought to the attention of the reader in a connected narrative. The detailed investigation itself is not presented, nor has any new material been brought to light. At the present moment there is at least as much need of arranging the material already at hand and of presenting the picture it discloses of Teutonic paganism as of searching for new material. The former will, at any rate, be our task. For this very reason a general survey of sources will be omitted. Such a survey could be rendered valuable only by a detailed treatment, and this treatment would in itself involve a discussion of the material presented. Accordingly, to avoid needless repetition, the sources will be grouped according to the subdivisions of the book.

On the other hand, it will be necessary to devote some space to the history of the subject. It might, indeed, be supposed that such a history is essential only to the professional student, and therefore out of place in a book intended for a wider circle. Such, however, is not the case. Teutonic mythology owes its importance in part to the fact that in some of its aspects its material is incomparably richer than that of other mythologies. It is to the student of Teutonic mythology that the investigator turns when approaching questions regarding heroic saga or folklore, whether it be among the Hindus, Greeks, or any other people. For this reason a history of Teutonic mythology is of general importance, and cannot be omitted in a treatise of this character.

The nature of our subject suggests a treatment in two main divisions. In the first of these the data are arranged in historical order, periods and peoples are delineated in accordance with their distinctive characteristics; in short, a fragmentary historical sketch is attempted, so far as the sources will permit us to do so. In the second section the individual deities will

be dealt with as well as the myths, the various conceptions and observances, and the cult; and while the various origins of this material will be kept in mind, the attempt will be made at the same time to arrange the scattered data, so far as feasible, in groups. Only then will it be possible to draw general conclusions regarding the religion thus described, to form an estimate about it, and to determine its character and position in the family of religions.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF TEUTONIC MYTHOLOGY

A HISTORY of Teutonic mythology which attempts to do more than furnish a more or less complète bibliography ought to have three ends in view. Its first aim should be to show in what manner the sources have been discovered and made accessible, and in what way the material gained from these sources has been utilized. Secondly, it should indicate the results reached, distinguishing between such as may be regarded as definitely established facts and such as may be subject to subsequent modification. Thirdly, it should point out to what extent the study has been influenced by the general currents of civilization, as revealed by the questions to which our attention will have been directed, and the points of view from which the material will have been treated.

In our narrative we shall have to pass constantly from one country to another. German and Scandinavian investigators of Teutonic antiquity have, as a rule, followed and are to some extent still following different paths. Teutonic mythology bears less of an international character than most other sciences, although scholars of different nationalities have mutually influenced one another.

The study of Teutonic mythology may be traced back to the seventeenth century, when publications already appeared in which either the popular beliefs or the antiquities of a particular region are treated. In 1691 a Scottish clergyman, R. Kirk, wrote a treatise on "elves, fauns, and fairies," which has recently been reprinted as a document[1] of historical interest,

[1] R. Kirk, *Secret Commonwealth* (1691), with comment by A. Lang (1893, *Bibliothèque de Carabas*).

while in the Netherlands J. Picardt, in 1660, issued a work on Teutonic antiquities.[1]

As early as 1648, however, Elias Schedius[2] had essayed a complete Teutonic Mythology, a rather bulky work, in which the passages of the ancient writers descriptive of various peoples are treated with little historical discrimination. To these two sources, popular beliefs and the classical writers, there were soon added the records discovered in the North and the antiquities brought to light in various parts of Germany. The books and treatises dealing with this material as a whole or in part had, by the middle of the eighteenth century, reached the number of one thousand. Special mention among these should be made of Trogillus Arnkiel,[3] who first made use of the works of Scandinavian scholars, and of J. G. Keysler,[4] who drew upon Latin inscriptions and popular beliefs. Nearly all the writers of this period regarded the heathen gods from a euhemeristic point of view, as departed heroes. No one of them was able to establish his work on a sound historical basis by distinguishing between Teutons and Kelts.

The Scandinavian countries were destined to give the first impetus to the fruitful study of Teutonic antiquity. It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that in these regions the classic period of medieval literature passed imperceptibly into the period of historic study. Even in Iceland, the centre of Old Norse literary development, the historic past and the indigenous literature were, in the fifteenth and during the larger part of the sixteenth century, well-nigh forgotten. The renais-

[1] Johan Picardt, *Antiquiteiten der provintiën en landen gelegen tusschen Noordzee, IJssel, Emse en Lippe* (1660).

[2] Elias Schedii, *De Diis Germanis, sive veteri Germanorum, Gallorum, Britannorum, Vandalorum religione* (1648).

[3] Trogillus Arnkiel, *Cimbrische Heydenreligion; ausführliche Eröffnung was es mit der cimbrischen und mitternächtlichen Völker als Sachsen, etc., ihrem Götzendienst vor eine Bewandtniss gehabt* (as early as 1690; 4 vos., 1703).

[4] J. G. Keysler, *Antiquitates selectae septentrionales et celticae* (1720).

sance does not begin until the end of the sixteenth century, with the historical and literary labors of Arngrímr Jónsson and Björn Jónsson á Skardhsá. Much, indeed, had even then been accomplished elsewhere; the Paris edition of Saxo dates from the year 1514, and in the middle of the same century the last archbishop of Upsala, Olaus Magnus, had made the first attempt at writing a Norse Mythology, based on Saxo, on the Latin writers, and on the conditions of his own time.[1] Olaus had also investigated the monuments and drawn up a runic alphabet. Not until the seventeenth century, however, did the range of these studies begin to widen. In Denmark Ole Worm, Stephanius, and P. Resenius occupied themselves with monuments and runes, with the editing of Saxo, and the collecting of manuscripts. This was made possible after Brynjolf Sveinsson, Bishop of Skalholt in Iceland, had, in 1640, discovered the most important manuscript of the prose Edda — already known at that time — and had in 1643 first brought to light the poetic Edda. Despite the fact that the great fire at Kopenhagen in 1728 destroyed many manuscripts, and that during the second half of the seventeenth century many more were lost, there yet remained an extensive literature, including sagas, preserved in four great collections, which were destined to form the basis of subsequent study. These four collections are: 1. The manuscripts collected by Brynjolf himself and sent in 1662 to the king of Denmark (codices Regii). 2. The collection of Arni Magnusson made between 1690 and 1728 (codices A. M.). Both of these collections are to be found in Kopenhagen. 3. The manuscripts collected by Stephanius, now at Upsala (codices U.). 4. The codices Holmenses (codices H.), discovered in Iceland during the latter half of the seventeenth century, and at present in Stockholm.

[1] This work, which appeared in 1555, was entitled *Historia de gentium septentrionalium variis conditionibus statibusque*. On the map of Olaus Magnus, see O. Brenner, "Die ächte Karte des Olaus Magnus vom Jahre 1539" (*Christiania Vid. Selsk. Forh.*, 1886).

When this literature was first brought to light, and, indeed, for a long time afterward, the most phantastic ideas prevailed concerning its origin and antiquity. What had been found was thought to be only a small fragment of an Eddic archetype attributed to the Æsir themselves or to the princess Edda, shortly after the time of Odhin. This archetype, it was thought, contained the patriarchal beliefs of the ancient Atlantis-dwellers, some three hundred years before the Trojan war. The oldest runes were believed to date from 2000 B.C.

Following in the wake of Danish scholars and under the influence of conceptions peculiar to the eighteenth century, Mallet, a Swiss, wrote a book, the purpose of which was to delineate the history of civilization. The North was extolled as the cradle of liberty, and Mallet included in his treatise a translation of several selections from the Edda. The book was translated into English in 1770 by Bishop Percy, who added an important preface, in which a sharp distinction was, for the first time, drawn between Teutonic and Keltic legends and antiquities.[1]

Literature also turned these finds to good account. In Germany, Herder, with his breadth of view, did not fail to recognize the value of Old Norse literature. Standing under the influence of the currents of thought prevailing in the eighteenth century, he paved the way for the Romanticism of the nineteenth. His broad and profound intellect combined cosmopolitan interests with an appreciation of the characteristically national, a love for the natural with a feeling for historical development. He took hold of the new material and opened up new points of view. From near and far he gathered folk-songs, though among these naïve *Stimmen der Völker*, as he called them, there is many a song which we no longer regard in this light. Thus he believed Völuspa to be a product of primitive times,

[1] P. H. Mallet, *Northern Antiquities, translated by Bishop Percy*, was reprinted as recently as 1882.

although he recognized that criticism had not as yet passed a final judgment on the poem. The less known F. D. Gräter also helped to spread a knowledge of Norse mythology and of folk-song.[1] In Denmark the spirit of patriotism served to heighten the interest in the newly discovered poetry. Öhlenschläger, proceeding on the supposition that the Eddic poems were parts of a single production, sought through his cycle of poems, *Nordens Guder* (1819), to infuse new life into the old myths.

What the elder Grundtvig achieved along this line also belongs to the domain of literature rather than that of science. N. F. S. Grundtvig,[2] the enemy of rationalism, the champion of personal faith and the living word as against petrified formalism in church and dogma, also showed great zeal in advocating the development of national character, and put the stamp of his individuality on the intellectual life of his people. His enthusiasm for the Norse heroic age, his acumen in the treatment of myths, whose profound figurative language he sought to interpret, his graceful renderings of these ancient legends in beautiful poems, all this may have borne little or no fruit to the cause of science, but it unquestionably imbued the heroic age with new life in the popular mind.

Meanwhile the opinion that the Edda contained a most ancient, original, and splendid mythology was not held without opposition. Finn Jónsson, who a century after Brynjolf held the episcopal see of Skalholt, recognized in the Edda a mixture of Christian ideas and scandalous fabrications. In a brief survey of the production he discussed the main features of the religion in a somewhat dry and prosaic fashion.[3] A deeper impression was made by the direction which studies in Teutonic

[1] In his periodical *Bragur* (8 vos., 1791–1812).

[2] N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Nordens mythologi eller Sindbilled-Sprog historisk- poetisk udviklet og oplyst.* It appeared in 1832 as a revised form of an outline published in 1807.

[3] Finnus Johannaeus, *Historia Ecclesiastica Islandiae* (4 vos., 1772).

mythology took in Germany. As early as 1720 Keysler suspected the existence of Christian influences in Norse mythology. Towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century this opinion steadily gained ground through the writings of von Schlözer,[1] Fr. Adelung,[2] and Fr. Rühs.[3] The work of these three authors is frequently placed in one category, but in reality only that of Rühs possesses scientific value. He distinguished in Norse mythology three factors: popular conceptions of Teutonic origin, Christian ideas, and fragments of Greek and Roman mythology. The Edda, he contended, could not be regarded as the common heritage of the Teutons, nor even of all Scandinavians. It was a poetic production that had originated in Iceland under Anglo-Saxon influences. The culture of the North was of Christian origin. The kinship of these ideas with recent theories and results is self-evident.

The chief centre of these studies remained, for the time being, Kopenhagen, where collections of manuscripts and monuments were deposited, and where, also, these studies received strong encouragement because they were regarded as subserving national interests. From 1777 to 1783 a beautiful edition of Snorri's *Heimskringla*, in three volumes, was published at the expense of the Danish crown-prince. In 1806 the erection of a museum of Norse antiquities was begun. In 1809 the publication of the Danish *Kæmpeviser* was commenced, while a few years later, in 1815, the Icelander Thorkelin furnished the *editio princeps* of *Beowulf*. Rasmus Nyerup (1759–1829) carried on extensive investigations in Old Danish popular literature, archæology, and mythology. R. K. Rask (1787–1832), who was one of the founders of modern linguistic

[1] Von Schlözer, *Isländische Literatur und Geschichte* (I, 1773).

[2] Fr. Adelung in *Becker's Erholungen* (1797)

[3] Fr. Rühs, *Die Edda* (1812); *Ueber den Ursprung der isländischen Poesie aus der angelsächsischen* (1813).

science, sought the origin of Old Norse in Old Thracian, from which he also derived Greek and Latin. While Rask did not extend his comparisons to the Asiatic languages, the Icelander, Finn Magnusen (1781–1847), did not hesitate to find parallels in Oriental and Egyptian mythology, which he regarded as evidences of a common primitive origin. Both in editions of texts and in works on mythology [1] he made use of an enormous mass of material, much of which is still of value despite the fact that no reliance can be placed on his astronomical interpretations, on the accuracy of his Oriental parallels, or on his theory of the Trojan origin of the Northern peoples. Thus the horizon gradually widened, notwithstanding the phantastic and arbitrary combinations that were still being made. Skule Thorlacius, in a study on Thor and his hammer,[2] went so far as to make an isolated attempt to distinguish between the earlier and later elements of mythology.

No one of these men, however, produced work of more lasting value than P. E. Müller (1776–1834), who took up the gauntlet in defense of the genuineness of the Æsir-religion in a manner that carried conviction to the brothers Grimm and to many of their successors. He was the first to render a rich and well-arranged collection of heroic and historical sagas from medieval Norwegian-Icelandic literature accessible, and his edition of Saxo, with *Prolegomena* and *Notae uberiores*, completed after his death by J. M. Velschow, possesses lasting value.[3]

Before the advent of the Grimms Germany was far behind the Danes and Icelanders in the study of mythology. With

[1] *Priscae veterum Borealium mythologiae lexicon* (1828); *Eddalæren og dens oprindelse* (4 vos., 1824–1826). An estimate of Finn Magnusen may be found in N. M. Petersen, *Samlede Afhandlinger*, III; a survey of Norse studies during this period in an important essay (1820) of W. Grimm, *Kl. Schr.*, III.

[2] In *Skandinavisk Museum*, 1802.

[3] P. E. Müller, *Ueber die Echtheit der Asalehre und den Werth der Snorroischen Edda* (in Danish 1812, in German 1811); *Sagabibliothek* (I, 1817; II, 1818; III, 1820); *Saxonis Grammatici Historia Danica* (I, 1839; II, 1858).

the national revival, however, that followed the French domination, the famous minister of education, von Stein, gave the first impulse towards the publication of that gigantic collection of historical sources known as the "Monumenta Germaniae historica," which, under the editorship of G. H. Pertz, began to appear in 1826. But indispensable as these sources subsequently proved to be for the study of Teutonic heathenism, their publication at first exerted little or no influence.

It is difficult to form a just estimate of the value of the mythological work done in Germany during the first decades of our century under the influence of the Romantic movement. There can be no question of the good service which the movement rendered to the cause of science and of culture. Through the two Schlegels, August Wilhelm and Friedrich, and through Tieck, the language and gnomic wisdom of the ancient Hindus, as well as the works of Calderon and Shakespeare, and such subjects as the Middle Ages and popular poetry, were first brought within the general horizon. The Romanticists were also strongly attracted towards the study of the national past and of Teutonic paganism, though this interest did not proceed from the above-mentioned leaders of the movement. Heidelberg became the centre for the study of mythology, with Görres, von Arnim, Brentano, and Creuzer as the chief representatives. Among these the most gifted, perhaps, was Joseph Görres[1] (1776–1848), who devoted himself to editing German chap-books. It was he who perceived the relationship between the Norse and German legends of the heroic saga and recognized the age of migrations as the period which gave rise to the legends among Goths, Franks, and Burgundians. He was in error, however, in assuming that the heroic legends

[1] J. Görres, *Die teutschen Volksbücher. Nähere Würdigung der schönen Historien-, Wetter- und Arzneybüchlein, welche theils innerer Werth, theils Zufall, Jahrhunderte hindurch bis auf unsere Zeit erhalten hat* (1807); *Der gehörnte Siegfried und die Nibelungen* (*Zeitung für Einsiedler*, 1808).

were fragments of a single colossal poem. Görres subsequently turned aside from the study of Teutonic antiquity to seek, after the manner of his spiritual kinsman, Creuzer, in the myths of Asia the profound symbolical utterances of supreme wisdom. Creuzer himself did not make a study of Teutonic antiquity, but in his spirit F. J. Mone[1] (1796–1871) added to Creuzer's great work two volumes on Slavs, Kelts, and Teutons. In addition to this Mone brought together what was for that time a good collection of material for the study of the heroic saga. Nor are his investigations in this field without value, although this value is somewhat lessened by his tendency to seek in myths the ideas of speculative philosophy. There is less to be said in favor of the work of L. Achim von Arnim (1781–1831) and Clemens Brentano (1778–1842), who from 1806 to 1808 published a collection of folk-songs under the title *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Though the book won great favor, the slovenly manner in which it was edited and the large amount of worthless material it comprised, did not escape the keen eye of that ruthless critic in matters mythological, J. H. Voss.

The scientific productions of Germany during this period are conspicuous both for their virtues and their shortcomings. Though a lively interest was taken in the study of mythology and there was no lack of grand conceptions, the methods of work were uncritical, and marked by wildly phantastic combinations. The opinion prevailed widely that in the province of mythology ideas came to the gifted student through a sort of poetic inspiration. As a consequence it is not surprising that the works written during this period do not possess permanent value. Thus many of the Teutonic divinities which G. Klemm[2] enumerates never existed, and it frequently

[1] F. J. Mone, *Geschichte des Heidenthums im nördlichen Europa* (2 vols., 1822–1823, constituting Vols. V and VI of Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie*); *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der teutschen Heldensage* (1836).

[2] G. Klemm, *Handbuch der germanischen Altertumskunde* (1836).

involved considerable effort to remove such names as Krodo, Jecha, Hammon, Jodute, etc., from the list of Teutonic deities. C. K. Barth,[1] in a volume which reached a second edition, identified Hertha with Demeter, Isis, Io, Thetis, and a number of other goddesses. Here and there, however, fruitful work was accomplished, and occasionally ideas were brought forward that gave promise for the future. Thus, H. Leo[2] called attention to the limits to which the worship of "Othin" was confined geographically, and in Berlin F. H. von der Hagen[3] (1780–1856) published studies and editions of the Nibelungen Lay and the Norse sagas which, though marked by less grandeur of conception, showed sounder scholarship than the more brilliant effusions of the Heidelberg circle.

We have now reached the brothers Grimm, Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859), in whom we may likewise recognize the products of the Romantic period. They were connected more or less closely with the Heidelberg circle. The jurist Savigny, who was Jacob's beloved teacher, was the brother-in-law of Brentano, and it was von Arnim who gave the final impulse to the publication of the *Märchen*. Nor did Jacob keep himself entirely free from the aberrations of Romanticism. One of his earliest essays, entitled *Irmenstrasse und Irmensäule*, is full of wild etymologies and phantastic combinations. And yet there is from the very outset a great difference between the brothers Grimm and the Romanticists, both as regards personality and character of work. The former were thorough, scholarly, modest students, who with untiring zeal cultivated an extended but withal definitely circumscribed field, namely, German antiquity; while the Roman-

[1] C. K. Barth, *Hertha und über die Religion der Weltmutter im alten Teutschland* (second edition, 1835).

[2] H. Leo, *Ueber Othins Verehrung in Deutschland* (1822).

[3] Of F. H. von der Hagen's *Altdeutsche und Altnordische Heldensagen*, in three volumes, Vols. I and II appeared in a third edition in 1872; of Vol. III a second edition revised by A. Edzardi was published in 1880.

ticists, in practice as well as in theory, made an unbridled geniality their rule of life and scorned to impose limits upon the range of their activity. They were engaged in an endeavor to resurrect the past, whereas the Grimms, though recognizing a connection between the national past and the life of the present, endeavored primarily to acquire an historical knowledge of this past. In consequence they occupied themselves more with detailed investigations. Instead of regarding the traditions of Teutonic heathenism, after the manner of Creuzer, as the profound symbolical utterances of a primitive sacerdotal wisdom, Jacob sees in them poetic creations of the popular imagination. This sharp distinction between the popular and natural on the one hand and the products of art on the other, which latter he considers far inferior, is one of the corner-stones of Jacob Grimm's system.

That the work of the two brothers did not meet the wishes of the leaders of the Romantic school was shown among other things in a trenchant criticism by A. W. Schlegel, in the *Heidelberger Jahrbücher* of 1815, of the *Altdeutsche Wälder*, published in 1813. This criticism, which made a profound impression, dwelt more especially upon what Schlegel considered the erroneous views entertained by Jacob Grimm concerning poetry and sagas. His critic heaped ridicule on the "lumber" and "rubbish" of old sagas, which the Grimms regarded with such reverence, and on what was termed by some one[1] "their worship of the insignificant." This expression has survived as characterizing the activity of the Grimms, and from a term of reproach has come to be regarded as a term of praise. Schlegel's criticism, unjust as it was in many respects, did not embitter Jacob Grimm but induced him to strike out in a new direction, that of stricter and deeper grammatical study, which resulted, in the course of years, in such productions as his *German Grammar*, *History of the German Language*, and the *German Dic-*

[1] Sulpice Boisserée.

tionary, the latter produced in collaboration with his brother. He thus became the founder of the historical study of language. While his etymologies are at times fanciful and inaccurate, he is yet one of the greatest of linguists. For our purpose it is of especial importance to note that Jacob Grimm recognized the intimate connection that exists between myth and language. Even the language of to-day is rich in genuinely mythical expressions, by a true understanding of which we obtain an insight into a part of the intellectual life of our forefathers. Mythology does not, however, in the case of Grimm, resolve itself into an interpretation of words, and therefore the untenableness of many of his etymologies has not impaired the value of his mythological work.

But there were other fields besides linguistic science in which Jacob Grimm, either alone or in conjunction with his brother, became a pioneer. In the production of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*[1] and the *Deutsche Sagen*[2] the lion's share belongs to Wilhelm. In the *Märchen* all the popular tales that were still current among the people of those districts of Middle Germany, where they themselves lived, were collected with scientific accuracy and made a permanent, living possession of the whole nation. The *Deutsche Sagen* did not become equally popular. In this work were collected the legends that had become localized in oral tradition and that in this way had been handed down in history.

The *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*[3] are solely the work of Jacob. While legal subtlety and formalism were repugnant to his nature, he had learned from Savigny to regard law not as an abstract system, but in the light of an historical development on the soil

[1] The two volumes of the *Märchen* first appeared in 1812 and 1815. They have been many times reprinted, and a third volume with Notes was added in 1822.

[2] Published in two volumes, 1816 and 1818.

[3] Published in 1828; a fourth enlarged edition, in two volumes, published under the supervision of A. Heusler and R. Hübner, appeared in 1899. On J. Grimm's study of law, see R. Hübner, *Jacob Grimm und das deutsche Recht* (1895).

of national life. He accordingly sought to trace in his study of law "the subtle workings of the popular imagination"[1] in symbolic actions, poetic formulas, proverbs, and customs. He drew the material for this purpose less from official law-books than from the popular *Weisthümer*, in which we find the customs of particular localities or regions reflected. He edited several volumes of these sources, and his work was subsequently continued by Richard Schröder.

Even in a history of mythology this many-sided activity of Jacob Grimm needs to be touched upon, inasmuch as he himself never drew a sharp line of demarcation between one field and another. His aim was to grasp the significance of national life as an entity, and he considered language, law, and myth as merely so many different expressions of this life. W. Scherer called Grimm a "combining genius," just as Lachmann was designated as a "critical genius." His extraordinary powers of combination are indeed remarkable, and while they at times led him astray and caused him to see connections, where we no longer assume such, they also enabled him to view the enormous mass of details at his command as parts of one whole. Not that he forced individual phenomena into an abstract system or an artificial framework, but he regarded them as representing the living unity of an historical national existence. From Grimm's point of view everything was imbued with life. Language, he tells us, had originally no dead words. He recognizes the "sensuous elements" in law, and mythology he derives in large part from the "ever-flowing stream of living custom and saga." Such was the spirit and such the attitude in which Grimm approached the study of "German mythology,"[2]

[1] "Das stille Walten der Volksphantasie."

[2] The first edition of the *Deutsche Mythologie* was published in 1835, in two volumes; the second, with an important Preface added, in 1844. The third edition was unchanged. The fourth, in three volumes, with additions from Grimm's posthumous papers, was brought out from 1875 to 1878 under the supervision of El. H. Meyer.

and herein lies the explanation at once of the lasting value of his work and of its defects. Grimm himself has given an account, in his now classic preface to the second edition, of the manner in which he used his sources. The word "deutsch" in the title is not used in the sense of general Teutonic, as it is in some works of Jacob Grimm, but excludes Scandinavian. While it is true that the Edda has been handed down from "remotest antiquity," Grimm is primarily concerned with setting forth the independent value of the specifically German material. In this way he attempts to show that the Norse and the German mythology mutually support and confirm each other: "that the Norse mythology is genuine, consequently also the German, and that the German is old, consequently also the Norse." This unity seemed to Grimm and to many of his successors a plain and scientifically established conclusion. They held that all the objections advanced against the "genuineness" of the Edda had been triumphantly refuted by P. E. Müller, and that the German and Norse material together formed a harmonious whole. This view is now regarded as a weak point in the foundation on which the superstructure of Grimm's mythology rests. The fact is that the matter had not been as definitely determined as he supposed, and to many scholars it still appears to be an open question.

Without neglecting in his use of sources the written records that have come down to us, Grimm attached greater value to the living tradition connecting us directly with paganism, and to the popular saga. Despite the advantages which this method undoubtedly possessed, there lurked in it an element of real danger. According to Grimm, whatever is current in the mouth of the people, in legend and custom, every creation of the popular poetic imagination, constituting a permanent possession of the people, bears the stamp of originality and antiquity. He has, accordingly, frequently ascribed to the genuine prehistoric period of the German people what we now recognize

as a product of the Christian Middle Ages, and on the same principle he has found mythical ideas in the figurative language of medieval poets.

Accordingly, a large part of the material collected in Grimm's *German Mythology* can no longer be made use of, at least not in the form in which he put it. There are other defects that might be pointed out. So, for instance, attention might be called to the numerous untenable etymologies, to the arbitrary use so frequently made of foreign parallels, to the absence of mythological data from the heroic saga. It is a more thankful task, however, to emphasize the inestimable wealth of the material and the many fruitful points of view that the *German Mythology* presents. Even at the present day, more than sixty years after its first publication, no one engaged in any single problem of German mythology can afford to neglect the section of the work of Grimm bearing on the subject. The thirty-eight chapters, rather loosely strung together, do not form a complete system any more than they embody an historical development, but yet, taken as a whole, they possess unity and present a vivid picture of the religious ideas and customs of ancient times. That many details of this picture have in the course of time been found to be incorrect, does not materially affect the value and significance of Grimm's work. His book is still the chief guide of modern study; it may be said to form the foundation of all subsequent investigation and constructive work. Grimm fully succeeded in accomplishing what he had set out to do: not to retard but to stimulate scientific investigation. That the bad as well as the good qualities of such a work have found zealous imitators is not surprising. But it is again due, in large measure at least, to Jacob Grimm himself that those who followed in his tracks could supply and improve what was incorrect or deficient in the work both of the master and of his imitators.

As already indicated, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm labored

side by side. Among their joint publications that call for mention here are the *Irische Elfenmärchen*[1] and the *Edda*.[2] The former contained a very comprehensive introduction, in which the figures and the manner of life of the elves are described in great detail. The heroic lays of the Edda were regarded by the Grimms as the fragments of a great national epic, once the common possession of all Teutonic peoples. But aside from the share that Wilhelm had in the work of his brother, whose fame somewhat obscured his own, we must not fail to recognize his own independent merits. His studies were largely concerned with the North: he devoted himself to the investigation of the runes and translated Old Danish ballads and songs,[3] to some of which he assigned dates as early as the fifth and sixth centuries. His principal work is that on the Heroic Saga,[4] and he has the merit of having been the first to collect a rich store of historical material, which he then turned to account in tracing the origin and growth of these legends. He detached the heroic saga from history and mythology, assigning it to a more or less hazy "intermediate position" as poetry, a view less correct than that held by Jacob,[5] who recognized the fact that the material embodied in epic poetry has its roots in myth as well as in history.

Thus, notwithstanding the work they undertook jointly, each of the two brothers had his own field and followed his own bent of mind. Wilhelm occupied an intermediate position between his brother Jacob and another scholar, who, although

[1] *Irische Elfenmärchen*, übersetzt von den Brüdern Grimm (1826).

[2] *Lieder der alten Edda*, aus der Handschrift herausgegeben und erklärt durch die Brüder Grimm (I, 1815).

[3] *Altdänische Heldenlieder* (1811). His *Kleinere Schriften* are far richer in essays and reviews on Norse subjects than those of Jacob.

[4] *Die deutsche Heldensage* (1829; second edition, edited by Müllenhoff, 1867; third, by R. Steig, 1889).

[5] J. Grimm, *Gedanken über Mythos, Epos und Geschichte* (1813), contained in *Kl. Schr.*, IV.

less universal in his mental equipment and less exclusively devoted to Teutonic studies, yet left an impress on these studies as deep and lasting as that of Jacob Grimm. Karl Lachmann (1793–1851) introduced into the realm of Teutonic studies the stricter critical methods of classical philology, in which he was a master. He took no active part in mythological work as such, but through his essays on the Nibelungen[1] he directed the investigation of heroic poetry into new channels. What F. A. Wolf had done in the case of Homer, Lachmann attempted to do with the Nibelungen Epic, namely, to dissect and to reconstruct it by means of the so-called "liedertheorie." While not indeed failing to express his views on the contents of the legend, its historical and mythical elements, his chief aim was to determine the original text by means of the manuscripts, and to ascertain the separate lays through literary analysis. In this way the brothers Grimm and Lachmann, each acknowledging with due appreciation the others' merits, supplemented one another. Lachmann, however, to a far greater extent than the Grimms, created a school,[2] which, as over against the extravagant interpretations of mythologists who appealed to Jacob Grimm as their authority, maintained the wholesome discipline of philological method.

The Grimms and Lachmann were without compeers among their contemporaries. A unique and honorable position must, however, be assigned to the Tübingen professor and poet, L. Uhland (1787 1862).[3] His comprehensive studies of popular poetry, his history of the saga and Norse mythology are con-

[1] *Ueber die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichts von der Nibelungen Noth* (1816); *Kritik der Sage von den Nibelungen* (written in 1829, published in 1832); *Zu den Nibelungen und zur Klage. Anmerkungen* (1836).

[2] This school had, since 1841, as its organ M. Haupt's *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*. In 1873 Müllenhoff became its editor, and subsequently Steinmeyer. Since 1890 it has been edited by Schroeder and Roethe.

[3] Uhland, *Schriften zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage* (8 vols., 1865–1873), collected, and for a large part first published, after his death.

spicuous both for their great learning and for their finished treatment. His essays on Thor and Odhin are not entirely free from an allegorizing tendency that would interpret everything on the basis of natural phenomena, and they also fail to distinguish sharply enough between the various elements that enter into the formation of a myth, but the material is always presented in an interesting and attractive way and is handled with great care. The best work, however, that Uhland has produced in this field is his characterization of epic poetry, in which the various personages and incidents are sketched in an inimitable manner.

Some mention must be made in this connection of W. Müller.[1] He paid dearly for his temerity in attempting, by a combination of the German data with the Norse framework, to formulate a system out of the material in Grimm's Mythology. For all that he does not deserve to be altogether forgotten. In the heroic saga he recognized historic events, and in its heroes representatives of various lands, and while his work did not yield any lasting results the attempt to explain the heroic saga along historical lines was in itself meritorious.

The impulse given by Grimm induced many scholars to study and collect popular tales under the belief that in these tales the old myths and gods were to be recognized, forming a kind of "German Edda." This was the point of view of J. W. Wolf[2] and many others. Among the mythologists of this generation no one achieved greater success than K. Simrock. He was thoroughly conversant with medieval poetry, and through his clever translations including the Nibelungen and Kudrun —

[1] W. Müller, *Geschichte und System der altdeutschen Religion* (1844); review by J. Grimm in *Kl. Schr.*, V. Subsequently he wrote among other things *Mythologie der deutschen Heldensage* (1886); *Zur Mythologie der griechischen und deutschen Heldensage* (1889).

[2] J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie* (I, 1852; II, 1857); *Die deutsche Götterlehre* (1852; second edition, 1874). Of his *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie*, subsequently continued by W. Mannhardt, four volumes appeared.

this literature was rendered more generally accessible. His translation of the Edda, though now superseded by the infinitely better one of Hugo Gering,[1] was also for the time a useful work. The fame, however, which Simrock gained through his *Mythology*[2] was undeserved. His work contains a large mass of frequently unreliable material, treated without historical method and characterized by forced interpretations. It typifies all the shortcomings of the period in which it was produced and retarded rather than stimulated subsequent investigation.

While German mythologists were thus working, unconscious even of the existence of numerous problems and without observing any strict method, there gradually arose a school which was destined to wield a paramount influence for several decades, namely that of the comparative mythologists. As pioneers of this school we need only mention F. Max Müller and A. Kuhn. It is not necessary here to treat at length the well-known and widely discussed principles of this school. We are at present in greater danger of underestimating than of overestimating the significance of this tendency, which after all is considerable. As a working hypothesis it has rendered important services, but it has seen its day. Linguistic science, which was expected to be the key to unlock the secrets of mythology, at first bade fair to fulfil its promise most brilliantly, but as research widened and deepened, it was seen that the etymologies advanced were unreliable, and that the fair structure of comparative Indo-European mythology rested on insecure foundations. In their use of the phenomena of nature for the interpretation of myths, the comparative mythologists by no means took account of all the existing features, and were moreover far from unanimous in their opinions. Where one recognized

[1] H. Gering, *Die Edda* (1892).

[2] K. Simrock, *Handbuch der deutschen Mythologie mit Einschluss der nordischen* (1853; sixth edition, 1887).

everywhere the drama of the thunderstorm, another reduced nearly all myths to symbols of the dawn and sun.

German mythology was also affected by this tendency. Sagas and customs were regarded as the popular form assumed by the old belief in the great gods, the degenerate offspring, as it were, of mythology proper. In the *Mythen-Märchen* the old deities were accordingly regarded as continuing an existence in a more or less obscure form.[1]

This led A. Kuhn industriously to collect sagas in Northern Germany. His work[2] is of importance, not so much on account of the explanations he offers in the notes attached to his collections, but because he was one of the first, after the brothers Grimm, to give an impulse to the gathering of local material — the necessity for which was afterwards universally recognized. His brother-in-law, F. L. W. Schwartz,[3] who had aided him in collecting sagas, cut loose in part from the comparative school and followed out a method of his own. While adhering to the theory of nature-interpretation he no longer regarded popular tales as distorted myths. According to Schwartz this body of popular traditions, the "lower mythology" as it was called, has a life of its own, quite independent of the "higher mythology." It is fully as original, representing a more embryonic form than the "higher mythology" which is handed down in literature. Schwartz also recognized the correspondence existing between the "lower mythology" and the conceptions of savages, and in this way the comparative

[1] This is still the point of view in such a book as Fr. Linnig, *Deutsche Mythen-Märchen*, a mythological interpretation of the *Märchen* of the Grimms.

[2] A. Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche* (1848); A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen* (2 vos., 1859); A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen* (1843).

[3] The following works of Schwartz come in for consideration here: *Der Ursprung der Mythologie dargelegt an griechischer und deutscher Sage* (1860); *Die poetischen Naturanschauungen der Griechen, Römer und Deutschen in ihrer Beziehung zur Mythologie der Urzeit* (I, 1864; II, 1879).

study of myths began to extend beyond the circle of peoples linguistically akin.

No less important, though not attracting as much attention, was the work of the Austrian consul, Johann Georg von Hahn,[1] who devoted himself to collecting Greek and Albanian popular tales, and in a bulky volume endeavored to sketch the science of folklore (*Sagwissenschaft*). Although differing from the comparative school in important particulars he did not cut loose from it altogether. Instead of seeking the solution of mythological problems exclusively in etymologies he analyzed the narratives and compared and combined the various elements, and fully recognized the close relationship existing between god-myths, heroic sagas, and popular tales. He illustrated these various characteristics by means of statistical tables, showing the types and the variants. He thus pursued the path which the modern science of folklore is accustomed to tread. In this way new ideas arose and were combined more or less fully with those of the comparative school. The comparative school has, even at the present time, some firm adherents. Among these may be reckoned the Swede, V. Rydberg,[2] who shows great learning in the combination of various species of mythical narratives and according to whom even the cosmogonic myths are to be classed among the original possessions of the primitive Indo-European period. Such attempts, however, — of which this single example will suffice, — lie outside of the current of modern development.

W. Mannhardt (1831 1880) joined issue with the comparative school. This scholar, although struggling during his whole life with sickness and adversity, and possessed of no adequate

[1] J. G. von Hahn, *Griechische und albanesische Märchen* (2 vos., 1864); *Sagwissenschaftliche Studien* (1876).

[2] V. Rydberg, *Undersökningar i germanisk mythologi* (I, 1886; II, 1889). Of the first volume there has also appeared an English translation under the title of *Teutonic Mythology* (London, 1889).

philological training, directed the study of Teutonic mythology into wholly new paths. He was at first a faithful follower of the comparative school, as may be seen from an extensive work[1] in which he compared Thor, Holda, and the Norns with Indian myths, and gave to them a meteorological interpretation. In addition to this he wrote a survey,[2] in which the results of comparative investigations were summed up. Shortly afterwards, however, the works of the anthropologists Waitz, Bastian, and especially Tylor, caused him to forsake the methods not only of the comparative school but of Jacob Grimm as well. His reasons for doing so are stated in a famous preface to a volume published in 1877.[3] He now looked upon animism, the belief in souls and spirits, as the most original form of belief. The proof for this he found in popular customs, to which, rather than to popular tales, he henceforth attached prime importance. In Teutonic mythology he was the first to draw a sharp line of demarcation between manners and customs on the one hand and popular tales on the other. The latter, he held, were not original, since Benfey had clearly shown that the larger part had been derived through historical channels from Indian tales. Mannhardt, accordingly, concentrated all his energies upon the investigation of popular customs and of the beliefs that lie at the basis of these, particularly upon what was connected with the life and growth of plants: belief in tree-souls and forest-sprites, worship of trees, observances upon the reappearance of vegetation, at the change of seasons, and at harvest time. He collected this material by

[1] *Germanische Mythen. Forschungen* (1858).

[2] *Die Götterwelt der deutschen und nordischen Völker* (1860).

[3] The brief essays *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund* (1865) and *Die Korndämonen* (1868) are to be regarded as the forerunners of the second period of Mannhardt's activity. Then follow *Wald- und Feldkulte: I, Der Baumkultus der Germanen* (1875); *II, Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (1877, containing the Preface mentioned above) and *Mythologische Forschungen, aus dem Nachlasse, mit Vorreden von K. Müllenhoff und W. Scherer* (1884), QuF. LI.

distributing detailed series of questions throughout Germany as well as among the French prisoners of war in 1870, the answers to which are now deposited in the Royal Library at Berlin. Mannhardt himself made partial use of this rich material and supplemented it by collecting the parallels to be found in classical antiquity. In this way the correspondence in many particulars between the official organized cult of Greece and Rome and the popular customs current in the rural districts of Germany became evident. The results obtained by this method opened a new perspective and threw unexpected light on the study of mythology. No one who has read Mannhardt's works can fail to be impressed with the fact that so large a part of popular superstition and popular custom finds its explanation in the analogies of vegetable and animal life. Moreover, Mannhardt, influenced in this respect by Müllenhoff, possessed a truer historical sense than usually falls to the lot of the followers of the anthropological school. Avoiding preposterous combinations, he endeavors to explain popular traditions from their own immediate environment. He distinguishes between original and secondary elements, between what is national and what is foreign, and as a consequence his structure possesses greater solidity than others which have been reared upon the basis of folklore alone. We should not, however, lose sight of the fact that Mannhardt has investigated only a limited group of phenomena and has not produced a complete mythology. Important as it was to take up the hitherto neglected "forest and field cults," still this study does not comprise the whole of mythology any more than it furnishes an explanation for the belief in the various gods. While Mannhardt is not so one-sided as J. Lippert,[1] who with Herbert Spencer unhesitatingly resolves all deities into ancestors or fetiches, he yet builds too largely on preconceived opinions

[1] J. Lippert, *Die Religionen der europäischen Culturvölker, der Litauer, Slaven, Germanen, Griechen und Römer* (1881).

and assumes *a priori* that the lower conceptions, such as animism, are also the more primitive. Even over against Mannhardt, therefore, a stricter method in the treatment of folklore may justly be insisted upon. In a closely related domain U. Jahn[1] has furnished a good example of such a method.

Thus both the comparative and the anthropological schools — the latter even more than the former — have made their influence felt in the sphere of Teutonic mythology. The historical school of Lachmann took little part in mythological work. W. Wackernagel and M. Haupt confined themselves to their more rigorous philological studies. They looked upon dilettanti collectors and capricious followers of the comparative school with scorn and derision. They showed the folly of seeking higher mythology in every popular tradition, ridiculing the method which identified an ass that excretes ducats with Wodan who bestows riches, and which saw in every reddish beard a bit of Thor. By this method they claimed every red cock and every foul-smelling he-goat would eventually be proclaimed ancient Teutonic deities.

An exponent of the historical school, looked up to by many younger scholars as their master and chief, was Karl Müllenhoff[2] (1818–1884). Equipped with the strict philological method of Lachmann, he has more especially made the data pertaining to geography, ethnography, and literary history the subject of his investigations. While occasionally branching out into the domain of folklore, as, for example, in his excellent

[1] U. Jahn, *Die deutschen Opferbräuche bei Ackerbau und Viehzucht* (1884), GA. III.

[2] It is impossible to mention all the essays of Müllenhoff published in periodicals such as the *Nordalbingische Studien* (6 vos., 1844–1854) and the ZfdA. The most important are: *Zur Geschichte der Nibelungensage*, ZfdA. X; *Zeugnisse und Excurse zur deutschen Heldensage*, ZfdA. XII and XV; *Ueber Frija und den Halsbandmythus*, ZfdA. XXX. The elaborate Introduction to the *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder der Herzogthümer Schleswig, Holstein und Lauenburg* and his *Beovulf* (1889) are also very important. The *Deutsche Altertumskunde* has appeared as follows: I (1870), II (1887), III (1892), IV (1900), V, 1 (1883), and V, 2 (1891).

collection of Sleswick-Holstein legends, he regards this material also from the point of view of the history of popular poetry, and emphasizes the necessity of defining it, locally and chronologically, as accurately as possible. Folklore proper, as well as palæontology, linguistics, and legal antiquities, lies outside of his sphere. His *Deutsche Altertumskunde* is not to be regarded as the torso of an unfinished masterpiece, but constituted from the very outset a series of special investigations not forming a connected whole. What he sees and describes is not endowed with life to him as it was to Jacob Grimm, although Müllenhoff is not lacking in power of combination, in imagination, or in devotion to his subject. He subjects his working material to a far more rigid and searching criticism than did Jacob Grimm, but in his anxiety to be exact and exhaustive he is frequently discursive. Lengthy geographical and ethnographical investigations, at times only slightly connected with the subject proper, fill the first three volumes of his *Altertumskunde*. The fourth volume, published from the papers left by him, contains his valuable lectures on the "*Germania* of Tacitus." The fifth treats chiefly of the Edda and furnishes, among other things, a detailed commentary on Völuspa, in which he repels with much feeling the more recent attacks on the genuineness of this poem.

The labors of Müllenhoff have yielded abundant fruit. First of all he laid especial stress on the necessity of a rigorous historical method — of which mythologists need to be reminded again and again. In his collection of documentary evidences pertaining to the heroic sagas he followed in the footsteps of Wilhelm Grimm, and his work in this field would seem to represent finality. The aftermath left for his successors can at any rate not be large. He was also the first to show how in the heroic sagas historical elements of the migration period have mingled with myths. While Zeuss [1] had preceded him in

[1] Kaspar Zeuss, *Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme* (1837).

the discovery of the ethnographic material, yet Müllenhoff was the first to exploit it on a large scale and to turn it to account for the study of mythology. While not all his observations on the connection between the tribal life and the gods and cults of the ancient Teutons are established beyond controversy, he at least opened up a fruitful point of view and made it inconceivable that in the future any mythological element should, without further proof, be regarded as common to all Teutonic peoples. In some particulars Müllenhoff still adhered to the meteorological interpretations of the comparative school. Neither his conception of the necklace-myth, nor even his opinion that Tiu, the ancient Indo-European sky god, was originally the chief divinity of all Teutons, can be unconditionally accepted. His criticism of the Eddic poems, too, is in no way final. For all that, Müllenhoff is next to Grimm the most imposing personality in the field of mythological research. His work has been preëminently fruitful in reviving investigation on many points, and while much still remained to be done, and the work of the master himself stood in need of correction, the historical method in the study of Teutonic mythology was once for all established. He who ignores this method need not be taken into account.

The appearance of various new periodicals[1] alongside of the older *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* gave evidence of the many-sided character of the work done in the field of Teutonic antiquity. Ground that Mannhardt and Müllenhoff had let lie fallow now began to be tilled. Norse literature, in which Müllenhoff had confined himself almost exclusively to the criticism of the Edda, began to be investigated by a number of scholars.

[1] The *Germania* dates from the year 1856; it was at first edited by F. Pfeiffer, subsequently by K. Bartsch. In 1868 E. Höpfner and J. Zacher founded the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, at present edited by H. Gering and F. Kauffmann. H. Paul and W. Braune started in 1874 the *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Litteratur*, now edited by E. Sievers. Since 1879 there also appears a *Jahresbericht über die Erscheinungen auf dem Gebiete der germanischen Philologie.*

Among these Th. Möbius[1] devoted himself more especially to bibliography and to the editing of texts; K. Maurer,[2] to history and law. Political and social conditions were investigated by G. L. von Maurer, G. Waitz, and numerous other scholars, whom we shall have occasion to mention elsewhere. The study of history and literature also furnished contributions to the science of mythology. The activity of K. Weinhold,[3] characterized by taste and thoroughness, lies largely within this domain. He has written a number of important articles on mythological subjects, such as the giants, on Loki, and on the Vanir war, and, besides furnishing a sketch of Old Norse life, has championed in his study of folklore the cause of historical treatment as against the "dilettanteism so greatly in vogue, that would pass for science."

Before passing in review the more recent work of German scholars, we must cast a glance at the activity prevailing in Northern Europe which has been instrumental in bringing forward both new material and new points of view. Taking up, then, the thread of our narrative where we left it, Kopenhagen was until the beginning of the nineteenth century the centre where Danish and Icelandic scholars assembled to pursue the study of their national antiquity. During the course of the nineteenth century the other two Scandinavian countries also have taken part in this work, although not both in equal measure. In Sweden ancient historical sources were edited,

[1] *Catalogus librorum Islandicorum et Norvegicorum aetatis mediae* (1856); *Verzeichniss der auf dem Gebiete der altnordischen Sprache und Litteratur von 1855 bis 1879 erschienenen Schriften* (1880).

[2] Of his numerous works only the following need here be mentioned: *Ueber die Ausdrücke: altnordische, altnorwegische und isländische Sprache* (AMA. 1867); *Die Bekehrung des norwegischen Stammes zum Christentum* (2 vos., 1855–1856); *Island von seiner ersten Entdeckung bis zum Untergange des Freistaats* (1874).

[3] K. Weinhold, *Die deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter* (2 vos.; third edition, 1897); *Altnordisches Leben* (1856). Since 1891 he is editor of the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde.* The words quoted above are taken from a brief but important essay entitled *Was soll die Volkskunde leisten?* (ZfVuS. XX).

monuments investigated, and folklore collected, but little was done for the study of mythology proper.

Not so in Norway, which since 1814 had been separated from Denmark and united with Sweden, and where the people were imbued with a passionate love for their own national life. The enthusiasm with which the Norwegian "historical school" took up the study of the past suggests a comparison with the school of German Romanticism. Both schools were full of enthusiasm over their glorious national antiquity and its pure mythology; in Norway this sentiment bore a strongly marked particularistic character.[1] R. Keyser (1803–1864), for example, is primarily concerned, not merely in vindicating for the Eddic poems a high antiquity,[2] but especially in preëmpting them for Norway as opposed to Iceland.[3] The second and greater representative of this school, P. A. Munch (1810–1863), published an elaborate history in eight volumes of the Norwegian people from its beginnings to the year 1379. Though without architectonic or historiographic talent, the author's thoroughness and vastness of learning make his book a veritable storehouse for all who wish to reach the sources to the smallest details. While the service rendered by Keyser and Munch to history and literature is greater than what they did for mythology, still Munch's outline of Norse mythology is of some value, inasmuch as it presents the specifically Norse material in a systematic form, combined, though it is, with some untenable meteorological interpretations.[4] The lasting services, however, rendered by the Norwegian historical school consist primarily

[1] Compare for this historical school K. Maurer, *Ueber die norwegische Auffassung der nordischen Literaturgeschichte*, ZfdPh. I, and the important Introduction in J. E. Sars, *Udsigt over den norske historie* (2 vos., 1873–1877).

[2] Völuspa he would even assign to the fifth century.

[3] R. Keyser, *Efterladte Skrifter* (2 vos., 1866–1867).

[4] P. A. Munch, *Det norske Folks Historie*, appeared from 1852 to 1863; of his *Nordmændenes ældste Gude- og Heltesagn* (1854) a new edition was prepared by Kjaer in 1880.

in the gathering of a vast mass of material from the historical sagas and from Old Norse literature in general, to the study of which a hitherto unknown scope was given. Besides this, it brought into sharp relief the national differences existing in the Scandinavian North even in the earliest times.

Nor did Denmark remain idle. The runes were investigated by L. Wimmer (b. 1839), who, in agreement with the Norwegian, Sophus Bugge, supposed them to have been derived from the Latin alphabet. The longer runic alphabet of twenty-four signs (futhark) was accordingly held to be the older, and to have been subsequently shortened to that of sixteen signs. G. Stephens, professor at the University of Kopenhagen, a scholar of vast but dilettantish learning, published a magnificent volume, with plates, on the Runic Monuments. His inclusion of the English monuments in his treatment was a distinct gain. The traditional division of archæological investigation into three periods, the stone, bronze, and iron ages, was retained by a number of meritorious scholars: C. Thomsen (1788–1865), J. Worsaae (1821-1885), and S. Müller. Excellent collections of folklore have been made in Denmark by J. M. Thiele, in Norway by P. C. Asbjörnsen and J. Moe. Sv. Grundtvig (1824–1883)[1] published an unusually copious edition of Danish popular poetry, including also heroic songs, to some of which he assigned a date as early as the twelfth century — a view which met with opposition from some Norwegian quarters. He also published a delightful little volume on the heroic poetry, considered solely from its poetic side.

From this outline, which might be extended to include many more names, it will be seen how many-sided was the work done by Danes and Norwegians on the various periods of their antiquity. Among the works we have enumerated there are, of course, not a few containing mythological material or which

[1] *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* (5 vos., 1853–1890); *Udsigt over den nordiske oldtids heroiske digtning. Tre forelæsninger* (1867).

have a bearing on the study of mythology. Mythology proper flourished in Denmark more especially through the efforts of N. M. Petersen (1791–1862).[1] His Norse mythology views the myths of the Edda as parts of a system, as a drama of conflict, and brings the ethical and religious ideas into strong relief. While this standpoint is now antiquated, at the time when the book appeared it marked an important step in the right direction, as compared, for example, with the mystic dreamings of the elder Grundtvig. Of more permanent value than his *Mythology* is Petersen's *History of Denmark in Pagan Times*, an important source for the study of Danish sagas and pagan culture. The study of these sagas, for which this book first laid a solid foundation, and the general critical examination of original sources for the study of the history have since that time remained indigenous in Denmark (Joh. Steenstrup,[2] Axel Olrik) and Norway (G. Storm, J. E. Sars), although a somewhat narrow patriotism is now and then reflected in the various observations made by these authors.

Meanwhile, scholars had gradually begun to realize the importance of a more critical study of mythology. The idea that the myths constituted parts of one whole and were accordingly all old and indigenous had been abandoned. The first step in the direction of a stricter critical method was taken by a young Danish scholar, M. Hammerich, in a dissertation on the *Twilight of the Gods*, in which he pointed out the later origin of this myth, without, however, satisfactorily explaining its rise from historical conditions.[3] The criticism of E. Jessen was more incisive. He championed most earnestly the German character of the heroic sagas in the Eddic poems and maintained that these poems were themselves the later products of

[1] N. M. Petersen, *Nordisk Mythologi* (1849; second edition, 1863); *Danmarks Historie i Hedenold* (1834; second edition in 3 vos., 1854–1855).

[2] J. C. H. R. Steenstrup, *Normannerne* (4 vos., 1876–1882), is a classical work and indispensable for a knowledge of the Viking period.

[3] M. Hammerich, *Om Ragnaroksmythen* (1836).

Norse poetic art, composed chiefly in Iceland and certainly not antedating the period of the Vikings.[1] Henry Petersen[2] subjected the mythological material to a critical examination. Cult, names, and monuments, he argues, all go to show that Thor and Freyr were the true popular gods of the North. Odhin-Wodan was imported from Germany through the poetry of the scalds. Petersen's essay contains fruitful observations and valuable material, but his investigation remains too much on the surface to support adequately theses so new and far-reaching as those of the foreign character of the Odhin cult and the division of the gods into those of the scalds and nobility on the one side and those of the people on the other. The same objection is to be urged with even greater force against an essay of A. Chr. Bang, which attracted considerable attention. Within the limits of a short article Bang felt that he had proved that Völuspa was dependent in a literary way upon the Jewish-Christian poems commonly known as Sibylline oracles.[3]

It was reserved, however, for the Norwegian, Sophus Bugge (b. 1833), to strike the strongest blow at the old belief in the genuineness and antiquity of Eddic mythology. Even before becoming prominent as a mythologist, this scholar already enjoyed an undisputed authority in the domain of philology, as a student of runes and as editor of the Edda and of sagas. In his studies on Norse gods and myths he ventured, however, on far more uncertain ground, though led to do so by the belief that he had gained a firm footing through the combination of numerous historical data.[4] Following in the footsteps of his

[1] E. Jessen, *Nordisk Gudelære* (1867); *Ueber die Eddalieder. Heimat, Alter, Charakter* (1871), ZfdPh. III.

[2] H. Petersen, *Om Nordboernes Gudedyrkelse og Gudetro i Hedenold* (1876). The German translation by Minna Riess is faulty, but contains an Appendix by E. Jessen.

[3] A. C. Bang, *Völuspaa og de Sibyllinske Orakler* (1879). A German translation by J. C. Poestion appeared in 1880.

[4] *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns oprindelse* (1880 and following years; a German translation by O. Brenner, 1889); *Helgedigtene* (1896); *Bidrag til den ældste skaldedigtnings historie* (1894).

predecessors — Rühs among others — he sought the origin of numerous Norse myths in Christian conceptions and in classical mythology, with which the Vikings were supposed to have come in contact in the British Isles. While similar observations made by others before him bore the character more or less of unsupported hypotheses, owing to the lack of accurate historical knowledge, Bugge provided these speculations with a solid foundation, in part through his intimate acquaintance with the historical conditions of the Viking period, in part through his detailed analyses of groups of myths, as, for example, those of Baldr and of the tree Yggdrasil, which seemed to show the strongest evidence of Christian and classical influences.

Bugge's theory let loose a storm of both approval and disapproval, which has not yet subsided. A number of shorter and longer treatises were written in refutation of it. Among these must be classed a considerable part of the fifth volume of Müllenhoff's *Deutsche Altertumskunde,* in which protest is entered against what he regarded as the desecration of the Eddic myths. Calmer and more convincing are the arguments of Finnur Jónsson,[1] who brought forward evidence to maintain the development of the myths of the Edda out of the older scaldic poetry. While not assigning the oldest parts of the Edda to a date earlier than the end of the ninth century, and hence not excluding Christian influences, he yet contends that the Eddic poems are not to be explained as a mere conglomerate of Christian and classical elements. In that case their origin would have to be sought in the Western islands (*e.g.* Shetland and the Orkneys), an assumption which G. Vigfússon indeed makes, but over against which Jónsson defends the Norwegian origin of most of the Eddic poems. From other sides, however, Bugge received considerable support, K. Maurer,

[1] Finnur Jónsson first entered the lists against Bugge in AfNF. VI and XI. His views are, however, stated more in detail in *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie* (I, 1894; II, 1900).

O. Brenner, E. H. Meyer, W. Golther, and others rallying to his side. Some of these scholars did not hesitate to go to the extreme length[1] of assuming that the Norse Vikings in those countries where they obtained a foothold — more especially in Ireland and England — manifested a lively interest in monastic learning. They recast Jewish Sibylline books, Christian apocrypha, and Latin or Greek mythographers into the form of Norse myths, which as a consequence correspond in general plan as well as in details with the sources mentioned, and even betray the influence of medieval dogmatic writings. While such a supposition is in itself improbable and at variance with established facts, yet the problem as set by Bugge cannot be ignored in mythological investigation. It must be admitted that in many respects Norse mythology bears a somewhat secondary character, and an effort must therefore be made to determine what elements owe their origin to the poetic art of the scalds, and what have been introduced from foreign sources. If it be certain that the poetry of the Edda is not older than the Viking period, then we should expect it to show numerous points of contact with the culture of more highly civilized Christian peoples, more especially with that of the inhabitants of the British Isles. The reciprocal influence which the Kelts of Ireland and the Icelanders exerted on each other can no longer be questioned. On the other hand, the science of Teutonic mythology, even though accepting the existence of these later historical elements, and subjecting them to a critical examination, has no reason to despair and to abandon entirely the path trodden by Jacob Grimm and Müllenhoff. After the investigations of Bugge and Jessen, Norse mythology cannot be viewed in any other light than that of a special, later development of Teutonic mythology, that arose under foreign influences on Norse soil, but there is certainly no sufficient warrant to disown it entirely, as an illegitimate offspring.

[1] Especially E. H. Meyer, *Völuspa* (1889); *Die eddische Kosmogonie* (1891).

At present our science is in a stage in which the views of Bugge have not as yet been sufficiently digested. This is the more evident when we again turn our eyes to Germany. We there find the various theories of the schools that we have passed in review, either existing in a pure form or in part combined into the most curious mixtures. To the influences already mentioned must be added that of O. Gruppe,[1] who, though himself not a special student of Teutonic mythology, has yet subjected the methods hitherto employed to a most searching criticism. Gruppe advanced a theory concerning the origin and spread of religion to which he gave the name of "adaptionism." According to him religion is not a common characteristic of all human beings, springing from the very depths of the human soul, but owes its origin to the existence of certain social conditions and the satisfaction of certain individual wants, and has spread over the earth, along different routes, from a few historical centres, more especially from Egypt and Western Asia. He accordingly rejects both the common primitive Indo-European religion of the comparative school and the animism of Mannhardt. The latter, he urges, presupposes a transition from the worship of nature-spirits to god cults that cannot be shown to have ever existed. Furthermore, it fails to explain why correspondences should more especially be found in the higher, semi-philosophic myths, such as that of the creation. Gruppe seeks the origin of myths, not like Jacob Grimm among the people, but among the priests. In keeping with this he maintains that the myths are dependent upon the cult and not conversely. The most reliable sources of mythology are accordingly hymns used in the cult, prayers, and ritualistic precepts. We pass by the various routes by which Gruppe supposes religion to have spread from the land of its birth in Western Asia over Northern Europe. One of

[1] O. Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen in ihren Beziehungen zu den orientalischen Religionen* (I, Einleitung, 1887).

the main roads he believes to have led through Carthage, whose sway is held to have extended even over the British Isles. Of greater importance, indeed of especial significance, is the fact that Gruppe, subsequent to the efforts of Bugge and in a manner different from Bugge, again makes use of the historical contact of peoples in the interpretation of myths. According to Bugge it was the contact between the Scandinavian peoples and those of Western Europe during the Viking period; according to Gruppe, the far more problematical but by no means impossible contact in prehistoric times. Historical investigation must take account of the one as well as the other theory and must follow up every trace of such influence. Modern research must in fact bestow an increasing amount of attention on historical intercourse as a factor in the dissemination of myths and cults.

If we take a survey of the present status of mythological problems, we will still encounter in even the most recent mythological literature some of the same wild combinations and extravagant theories that we have met with before, and which seem so difficult to banish from our science. At the same time much good work has been and is being done. The sources, both texts and inscriptions, have been exploited; critical editions have been furnished; monographs on individual myths and heroic sagas have been written; historical facts and conditions have been investigated with great accuracy, and various periods carefully differentiated. The more important of these works will be mentioned in the bibliography to the different sections. Here we can characterize only the three best-known compendia of recent years, those of E. Mogk, E. H. Meyer, and W. Golther. One might feel inclined to add to these the short meritorious sketch of Norse mythology that F. Kauffmann[1] has given, but it is too brief and too one-sided to be regarded as representing an independent scientific standpoint.

[1] F. Kauffmann, *Deutsche Mythologie* (1890; second edition, 1893), in the *Sammlung Göschen* (No. 15).

Confining ourselves then to the three works mentioned, it will be seen that, notwithstanding great differences, they agree in three important particulars. In the first place, all three scholars are distrustful of the material derived from Norse sources. Although they include this material in their Teutonic Mythologies, they have not only abandoned the idea of a systematic unity and thus drawn a distinction between earlier and later elements, but they also reject a considerable part of this material itself as spurious. In this respect E. H. Meyer is the most radical. Secondly, they all take popular beliefs, the "lower" mythology, as their point of departure, although they differ from one another in their estimate of it. Finally, they entirely set aside, or at least make very light of, the heroic saga. This latter is at all events a defect, for that the heroic saga contains a considerable amount of material for the study of mythology may be seen from the historical treatment accorded to it by B. Symons[1] and O. L. Jiriczek.[2]

E. Mogk's outline[3] is conspicuous for the wealth of its material and for its clear arrangement. To escape the danger of combining heterogeneous material, he carefully scrutinizes the sources, following in this respect the injunction of Müllenhoff "that no evidence of Old Teutonic belief should be dislodged from the spot where it was found." At the same time Mogk does not deny the existence of certain primitive elements in the material once the common possession of the Teutonic peoples. Among this pro-ethnic material are to be classed the popular beliefs, sagas, and superstitions, in short, the "lower" mythology. Besides, some of the chief deities, Tiwaz, Thonaraz, Wôdanaz, and Frija, were common to all Teutons. Similarly, the national basis of the Eddic mythology cannot be gainsaid,

[1] B. Symons, *Germanische Heldensage*, in PG.²; also published separately (1898).

[2] O. L. Jiriczek, *Deutsche Heldensage* (second edition, 1897), in *Sammlung Göschen;* a brief sketch. Of a comprehensive work, *Deutsche Heldensagen*, the first volume appeared in 1897.

[3] E. Mogk, *Germanische Mythologie*, in PG.².

notwithstanding evidence of later development and foreign admixtures. Mogk does not indeed attempt to trace an historical development ; he does not suppose that the demons were originally souls, nor that the great gods are just as old as the "lower" mythology. Against the separate treatment of the religion of each individual tribe, Mogk advances objections of a practical nature. It is only exceptionally that he urges new points of view, as, for example, that Wôdanaz and Thonaraz were originally attributes of Tiwaz, subsequently personified into new deities. So far as a survey of the present state of the science is concerned, Mogk's essay is undoubtedly the best and safest guide.

Much more comprehensive is the large work of E. H. Meyer.[1] In view of his many-sided preparation for the study of Teutonic mythology, it is perhaps not surprising to find in his system the most contradictory views derived from very diverse sources. Previous to the publication of his mythology he had prepared the fourth edition of J. Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* and had written two volumes of essays on Indo-European myths, following largely in the footsteps of A. Kuhn. He retains also the latter's division into periods and draws the lines even more sharply. He is furthermore a loyal champion of the meteorological system of interpretation, which sees in the myths clouds, wind, and thunder. In his previously mentioned works on Völuspa and the Eddic cosmogony, he accepts the conclusions of Bugge and, explaining the Norse myths from the medieval Christian literature, completely sets aside Völuspa as a source of Teutonic mythology. In spite of these great differences he does not consider himself unfaithful to the historical method of Müllenhoff. This historical conception leads him to accept in part the migration-hypothesis of Gruppe, from whom he also adopts the division into popular and hierarchic myths — the latter subdivided into myths of the priesthood

[1] E. H. Meyer, *Germanische Mythologie* (1891).

and of the nobility — without, however, accepting the priority of what belongs to ritual and cult over the mythical. Meyer is more closely akin to the school of Mannhardt, whose animistic and biological conception of nature-myths he shares. He has besides turned to good account a discovery of Laistner,[1] who regards the dream and nightmare (*Alpdruck*) as a fruitful source of mythical ideas. It might appear to have been an impossible task to rear a compact structure from such heterogeneous materials, yet, strangely enough, Meyer has actually succeeded in constructing a system of Teutonic mythology more comprehensive than any hitherto existing. Critical examination of sources, interpretation of myths, and study of historical development — this threefold task of mythology — Meyer carried out in all its ramifications. His system enables us to see how souls and mares become nature-demons and higher demons, and how these latter become in turn the gods of the priests and the heroes of the nobles.

One must not inquire, however, at what cost such a system has been constructed. The most obvious results, such as the originality of some of the chief gods, who have certainly not developed from wind, thunder, and cloud demons, and the genuine Teutonic nucleus of the Norse myths are abandoned. In place of these the most unnatural and preposterous hypotheses are set forth as established results. Notwithstanding all these defects, Meyer's book is a notable production and possesses permanent value. In the first place, the material has here been collected more completely than anywhere else from out-of-the-way corners. But especially the chapter on Sources is indispensable. With unequalled completeness, it enumerates the sources from which we derive our knowledge of Teutonic mythology. In many respects E. H. Meyer is an unsafe guide, and his mythological system a warning example, but whoever

[1] L. Laistner, *Nebelsagen* (1879) and especially *Das Rätsel der Sphinx* (2 vos., 1889).

wishes to pursue these studies independently can but be grateful for the large amount of labor that he has saved others. Of late he seems to have forsaken mythology in favor of folklore.[1]

Far more attractive in outward form, and written in an interesting style, is the latest work of W. Golther.[2] Among his great predecessors he renders most homage to L. Uhland. Grimm he praises almost solely for the collecting of material. Towards Mullenhoff he is equally unjust. He admits the primitive character of the chief gods and the genuineness of the nucleus of the Norse myths, although he reduces both to a minimum. Sound common sense has with him reasserted its claims, not merely as over against some excrescences of Meyer's system, but as against the artificial character of the system itself. Without making as strong an effort to evolve a system, Golther seeks to trace the historical development of Teutonic mythology during the first thousand years of our era. He too begins with the "lower" mythology and then proceeds to treat the more philosophic myths of creation and the end of the world, concluding with a consideration of the cult.

A new path is struck out by the Dane, H. S. Vodskov,[3] in a work of which the long-deferred continuation is eagerly awaited. In a comprehensive introduction he treats of mythological method. The principles thus evolved he applies in the first volume, the only one that has as yet appeared, to the Vedic religion. In a subsequent volume he proposes to apply these principles to the Edda as well. Having previously combated Bugge's theories, he here rejects every form of the migration theory, which assumes that civilization moved across the globe during prehistoric times. Vodskov, on the contrary, holds that

[1] E. H. Meyer, *Deutsche Volkskunde* (1898).

[2] W. Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie* (1895).

[3] H. S. Vodskov, *Sjæledyrkelse og naturdyrkelse* (I, 1897; the Introduction had appeared as early as 1890). The essay combating the views of Bugge appeared in 1881, under the title *Guder og gloser*.

the tribes, during the period in which they spread over the earth, were without culture, and that all culture is bound to the country where it is found and must have originated there. This does not preclude the possibility of one people borrowing from an other whatever subserved its purpose. A broad current of civilization does indeed sweep across the earth, and if we follow up this stream, we shall begin to understand why some peoples remained behind while kindred tribes moved forward. In maintaining this view Vodskov is in accord with recent linguistic investigation, which has gradually allowed the wave theory to supplant the theory of ramification. As to the Indo-Europeans, they are the only race who passed beyond the worship of souls — so characteristic of the savage state and beyond which the two other races, the Mongols and Semites, never advanced — to a higher form of religion, namely, nature worship. This conclusion compels us to assign to the Indo-Europeans the highest position in the scale of development, even though they have derived not a little of their culture from the two other races.

Our survey would be incomplete without some account of the work done in other countries, though this is of less importance than what Germany and the Scandinavian nations have produced. England has investigated its own Anglo-Saxon antiquity, although here too Germany has lent a helping hand. In this field of investigation the student of Teutonic mythology is in a position to reap a far greater harvest than has as yet been gathered, and it is rather strange that in recent large works the Anglo-Saxon material should again have been notoriously neglected. The folklore of various districts has also been collected in England. On the whole, however, the study of Teutonic antiquity in England is mostly associated with the work of Norse scholars. So in the middle of the present century, B. Thorpe [1] largely followed in the footsteps

[1] B. Thorpe, *Northern Mythology* (3 vos., 1851–1852).

of N. M. Petersen and Keyser. Besides, Norse sagas have been and still are being translated and edited.[1] It was in England likewise that the Icelander, G. Vigfússon,[2] pursued the study of Norse literature along its entire range, manifesting in his writings wonderful learning and great acumen, but giving utterance frequently to wildly fantastic views. Together with York Powell he edited and translated the poetic thesaurus of the North, both the Edda and the poetry of the scalds, supplying at the same time valuable introductions and excursus. Unfortunately this *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* is, from a philological point of view, far from trustworthy.

Up to the present, America has made few contributions to the study of Teutonic mythology. The American minister at Kopenhagen, R. B. Anderson, showed his active interest in the work by making some of the Scandinavian investigations accessible in English. P. Du Chaillu[3] deserves praise for gathering and arranging the archæological material. The best that America has thus far produced is F. B. Gummere's concise but important study on the origins of the English-speaking peoples.[4]

Nor can Holland lay claim to special mention in the history of the science. The work of the Germanists there can in no way be differentiated from that of their German colleagues. B. Symons is an adherent of the historical method of Müllenhoff and has given us a critical edition of the Edda. His pupil, R. C. Boer, is known as an editor of Norse texts, for the most part published in Germany.

[1] S. Laing, *The Sea-Kings of Norway* (*Snorri's Heimskringla*, 3 vos., 1844), not directly from the original. G. W. Dasent, *The Story of Burnt Njal* (2 vos., 1861), a beautiful translation with a comprehensive and valuable Introduction. G. Vigfússon has edited several Icelandic sagas and in the Prolegomena to the *Sturlunga Saga* has given us a history of Norse literature. *The Saga Library* and *The Northern Library* give translations of the most important sagas.

[2] G. Vigfússon and F. York Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* (2 vos., 1883). Compare the reviews of Heinzel, AfdA. XI and Symons, ZfdPh. XVIII.

[3] P. Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age* (2 vos., 1889), with numerous illustrations.

[4] F. B. Gummere, *Germanic Origins* (1892).

We have reached the end of our historical survey. In conclusion, attention must be drawn to the wealth of available material for the study of Teutonic mythology. The subject has engrossed the attention of the various schools of mythological investigation, and in no other field can one arrive at a juster and clearer estimate of the value of the numerous diverging "working hypotheses" than in that of Teutonic mythology. A consensus of opinion has as yet by no means been attained. Not only with regard to mythological method in general, but also with regard to leading questions, such as the value of the various sources and the genuineness of the Norse myths, representatives of different schools stand violently opposed. The claims of the historical method can, however, no longer be gainsaid, albeit this method is variously understood and applied.

CHAPTER III

THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

"From the ancient grave-mounds no clear voice, but only confused sounds reach our ears." [1] "These remains afford but a glimpse of only a few aspects of culture, and these the less important ones." [2]

While acknowledging the value and significance of archæological studies, such statements should warn us against overestimating them. We possess numerous material remains from ages on which history proper sheds no light. We find stone monuments, stone chambers, stone circles, graves, lake dwellings, skulls, bones, utensils, implements, weapons, and ornaments. Through these abundant and varied remains, prehistoric archæology seeks for a solution of such problems as the distribution of races, the conditions of primitive times, and the origin of civilization. Archæological research in this way joins hands with geology, both having positive data at their command.

From finds made in the lakes of Central Europe, in the grottoes and river-beds of France, along the coast of Denmark, and in various other localities, conclusions may be drawn that are unassailable. It has been definitely established, for example, that in Europe as elsewhere the age of man on earth is to be reckoned by thousands of years, and it is equally certain that the life of our race during this prehistoric period did not present an idyllic picture. It is hardly possible to form too

[1] J. Grimm, *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, p. 797.

[2] J. E. Sars, *Udsigt o. d. norske hist.*, I, p. 67. "Det er dog kun ganske enkelte og underordnede Sider af Culturen, hvorom man of slige Sager kan faa nogen rigtig Besked."

low an estimate of the civilization of these prehistoric people, who knew no domestic animal other than the dog, were ignorant of agriculture, with difficulty warded off the attacks of wild beasts, found a scanty subsistence by hunting and fishing, were in certain localities doubtless cannibals, and possessed only the rudest weapons and implements.

We should, however, be on our guard against basing too bold and comprehensive theories on the results of these studies. What these material remains have to tell us, they tell us clearly enough, but their testimony is not nearly as far-reaching as many are disposed to believe. The finds, while numerous, are fragmentary. Alongside of objects whose origin and purpose are perfectly clear, there are others that allow wide scope for conjecture. Stones and bones are, after all, mute; they afford some indications as to outward conditions, but they do not allow us to penetrate into man's thoughts and feelings. It is well therefore to heed the warning of those who would dissuade us from attempting to give a complete sketch of the culture of the stone age, or from constructing theories concerning the origin of civilization on the basis of archæological study.

Due caution must be exercised in any endeavor to gather the fruits of these researches. The material found in Scandinavian countries is especially important. While much has been brought to light elsewhere, the remains from Denmark and Sweden, deposited for the larger part in the museums at Kopenhagen and Stockholm, are exceptionally valuable for prehistoric investigations.

The first question that presents itself is whether the prehistoric remains shed any light on the earliest migrations. Of what race or family were the people whose stone chambers and implements are found in Scandinavia and elsewhere? For a long time it was supposed, though without sufficient reason, that they must be regarded as of a race entirely distinct from our own.

The general scheme on which this supposition was based did indeed seem attractive. During the stone age, it was held, Finns and other Mongolian tribes extended far into Central Europe. The bronze age was identified with the Kelts and the iron age with the Teutons. It was thought that a dolichocephalous population of noble Indo-European blood was at any rate everywhere in Europe preceded by a brachycephalous people of a lower race. The facts as we now know them have led to a reconsideration of these theories, and have entirely done away with these hypothetical autochthons, of unknown or at least of foreign race. The skulls from the so-called giants' chambers in Denmark and the Swedish stone graves most probably belong, not only according to Scandinavian scholars but according to such an authority as Virchow, to ancestors of the same race as the present inhabitants. Moreover, if successive archæological periods always coincided with the conquest and domination of a new people that displaced the old, then there would be a sharp line of division between those periods. But this is by no means the case. The transitions are gradual. Neither suddenly, nor indeed universally, does bronze take the place of stone, or iron that of bronze.

The oldest remains give no indication of an extermination or dislodgment of one people by another. This does not, however, furnish an answer to the question whence these people came, nor does it exclude the possibility of foreign influences. The evidence, so far as we are able to penetrate the past, goes to show that no sudden changes or shiftings took place, at least not in the North. And while in Central Europe we know even in historic times of various changes in population, there are still strong reasons for believing that even the Alpine lake villages were inhabited by people of Indo-European blood.

The mode of life of these ancient Europeans has commonly

been held to have been nomadic.[1] They were thought to have come with their flocks from Asia, and until the beginning of our era, or even later, to have remained nomad shepherds. Some passages from classical authors were thought to lend color to this view.[2] Strabo claims that the tribes on the other side of the Elbe wandered up and down with their flocks. How this inhospitable, thickly wooded country afforded the requisite pasture, and of what these flocks consisted, is not clear. Cæsar's statement, that the Teutons did not engage in agriculture, is at variance with the mention of corn by the same author, and with the picture drawn by Tacitus, from which it appears that tilling of the soil was not unknown to the Teutons of the second century of our era.

If we are unable to regard the Teutons at their appearance on the stage of history as nomads, all the evidence in hand also argues against such a supposition in the case of the far more ancient prehistoric population. In the first place, neither Central nor Northern Europe can possibly have been a country adapted to a population wandering about with camels and sheep. The evidence gathered from the remains is to the same effect. When in the Alpine lakes we can count piles by tens of thousands, this certainly points to fixed habitations. The same argument applies to the large stone buildings and walls in Germany, England, and Scandinavia. Nomads may perhaps here and there erect heaps of stone, but they do not build *hünenbedden* (giants' hills), giants' chambers, and stone walls. Also the so-called *Kjökkenmöddings* (refuse heaps), along the Danish coasts, forming accumulations of remains of crustaceous animals and of the implements and utensils of the prehistoric inhabitants, show clearly that these people had settled there where the oyster beds along the coast furnished

[1] A contrary view is held, and justly so, by R. Much, *Waren die Germanen Wanderhirten?* ZfdA. XXXVI.

[2] Strabo, p. 291; Cæsar, *B. G.*, VI, 22.

them with food ready at hand. The oldest inhabitants found perhaps a scanty subsistence in hunting and fishing, and in what nature provided of its own accord, but fixed habitations must soon have led to the beginnings of agriculture, as in fact the objects found in the heaps indicate.

Archæological study clearly points to the definite establishment of three periods in the development of man: the ages of stone, of bronze, and of iron, the material in use indicating the existing degree of civilization. Danish scholars more especially have expounded this system at great length, each of the three periods being again separated into two large subdivisions. From the older stone age we possess the remains along the coast of the Cattegat, the refuse heaps, which are believed to go back to at least three thousand years before the beginning of our era. The later stone age is that marked by the large monuments and therefore known as the neolithic or megalithic period. Stones and implements already show better workmanship, and the beginnings of decorative art make their appearance. Between the ages of stone and bronze there lies perhaps a period of transition, in which copper was worked without an admixture of tin. Then follow the older and later bronze periods, which bring us up to, and perhaps even across, the border line of historical times. Last of all, iron weapons and implements come into use. What dates are to be assigned to these several periods is subject to great doubt. For Southern and Central Europe these periods must have set in several centuries earlier than in the Scandinavian North. In the latter region we know that iron was in use some centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.

At the same time, it must be noted that this entire theory of a succession of three periods still encounters occasional opposition. Lindenschmit[1] among others combats it violently. While it may be admitted that originally it was merely a

[1] C. Lindenschmit, *Handbuch der deutschen Alterthumskunde* (I, 1880–1889).

"working hypothesis," it has yet withstood the test of time and has on the whole permitted a satisfactory classification of the material. New discoveries too have tended to strengthen rather than to weaken it, and the system of three periods, in an expanded form, is at the present time endorsed not only by Norse scholars but by the majority of investigators in every land. The objection frequently brought to bear against it, that such a division has regard exclusively to the material of which objects are made, is no longer valid, inasmuch as more recent investigators, Sophus Müller,[1] for example, in determining dates also attach great importance — too great according to some — to the form, ornamentation, and decorative motifs. Moreover, the fact that these periods have been named from stone, bronze, and iron does not imply that the character of the culture depended wholly on this difference in material, but merely that the periods into which their culture may be divided coincided to a large extent with the use of these materials. Recently scholars have also taken into consideration that it is not always feasible to draw a hard and fast line between what belongs to an earlier and what belongs to a later period.

The prehistoric remains also shed light on the question of foreign influences on the inhabitants of the North. The proposition, indeed, that all work in bronze was of foreign importation, coming from either Phœnicia or Southern Europe, can no longer be maintained ; for alongside of what was unquestionably obtained through import, the Northern people themselves must have worked objects in bronze. On the other hand, it is more than probable that the spiral ornamentation which makes its appearance for the first time in the bronze age has a connection with Mycenæan art. This view is favored by the fact that a continuous strip of land, from Greece through Hungary and

[1] Sophus Müller, *Nordische Altertumskunde* (translated into German by Jiriczek, 2 vos., 1896–1898).

Germany down to Denmark, exhibits these spiral ornamentations on objects of bronze.

We may go farther and maintain that the entire culture of the bronze period, — the same period in which gold was first worked, — in the case of a land that produced neither copper nor tin, points of necessity to intercourse with other countries. On its side the North possessed *elektron* (amber), which was so highly prized in Greece, and which has even been found in Egypt in graves of the sixth dynasty.[1] We must accordingly assume that, even at a very early time, a traffic in bronze on the one side and in amber on the other connected Southern Europe, that is to say, Greece and Etruria, with Denmark and the Baltic. Nor was this trade carried on by the sea alone, through the Phœnicians, with their intermediate stations along the coasts of Western Europe, or even by way of Southern Russia to the Baltic ; but we know of a certainty that there existed several trade routes through the very centre of Europe, both to the British Isles and to Denmark. One of these followed the Danube, another the Rhone, Aar, and Rhine,[2] though it is to be noted that this trade did not establish direct connections between the North and the civilizations of Italy and Greece. Here too we must assume an undulatory motion. The wares probably passed from one tribe to a neighboring one, and in this way the barter of barbarians with one another may have established communications between Southern and Northern Europe.

While the thesis here proposed is more or less conjectural, it is yet a conjecture resting on established facts, and which furnishes the best explanation of the facts. It is evident in any case that, from the earliest times, the culture and civilization of the Teutons were derived from foreign sources and that

1 G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, I (1895), p. 393.

2 H. Genthe, *Ueber den etruskischen Tauschhandel nach dem Norden* (Neue Ausgabe, 1874).

whatever the intermediary road may have been, the use of bronze was derived from the ancients. It is no longer possible to determine what other features are due to borrowing outside of this metal and the ornamental motif, but inasmuch as the connection was not a direct one, it is not likely that there are many. Material objects pass more readily from hand to hand than ideas and customs, but, since the way was open, the possibility of a certain degree of influence must be taken into account.

We have dwelt upon this subject at length in order to supply the necessary setting in the pursuit of our main inquiry, namely, the religion of which these ancient remains give evidence. We have already warned the reader against entertaining too high expectations of the results of this inquiry. The remains we possess are fragmentary, and it is always a hazardous task to evolve thoughts and feelings from mute monuments. In times gone by numerous explanations were ventured that are now no longer regarded within the range of possibility. The well-known stones near Salisbury, for example, — the so-called Stonehenge, — were certainly not erected as a memorial to the four hundred noblemen slain by Hengist in the year 472, as Nennius thought, who first mentions this monument in the ninth century. Nor are they to be looked upon as the remains of a Roman temple, as Inigo Jones claimed in the middle of the seventeenth century. Similar remains in Denmark Ole Worm (1643) regarded as old meeting-places for the "Thing," where justice and law were administered and kings chosen, or as the space laid out for single combats or for the erection of altars on which sacrificial offerings were made. Thus people groped about in the dark. There was a disposition to regard as a sacrificial object every knife brought to light, and to identify every hammer without further proof as the insignium of Thor. Thomsen and Worsaae were instrumental in putting an end to many arbitrary combinations of this sort, but not without at times substituting for them others no less dubious.

Even at present all manner of popular tales of giants and spirits are associated with the Jættestuer and Troldstuer, but scholars are generally agreed that *hünenbedden* and giants' chambers and the like were in the main graves. The objects found in them can readily be explained as offerings to the dead or as magic charms for their protection. What purpose the large stones on the grave subserved cannot be stated with certainty. Were they monuments raised in honor of the dead? Or was the stone to bar the soul of the dead from coming back to the world of the living, thus serving as a protection to the living against dangers from this source? Or, since the fate of the soul in another world depended on the uninjured state of the body, was the stone placed there as a protection of the corpse against wild animals? Each of these views has its advocates; and the grounds for giving to any one of them a preference over the others are forthcoming solely in the uncertain, and by no means entirely unequivocal, analogies with usages found among other tribes more or less distant.

The same observations apply to most of the other characteristic features of the remains. A large number of stones in Sweden have holes apparently made for some other purpose besides ornamentation. At present it is the custom of the people to lay gifts for the elves in these holes and then speak of them as elf-mills (*Elfvekvärnar*) or elf-stones. Among the objects that have been found, a number seem to be amulets and offerings to the dead. It has been observed that many of the skulls are trepanned, and in some cases this surgical operation was perhaps a magic practice performed long before death ensued. In the tombs of the stone age, traces of fire are frequently found beside the buried bodies, be it to cheer and warm the dead or to ward off evil spirits from the grave. While all these facts are absolutely certain, their interpretation remains, from the nature of the case, more or less vague and divergent. That the objects found are to be connected with

worship of the dead and with conceptions as to the fate of the soul after death is fairly clear, but it is impossible to define this general character in more specific terms.

The *Heimskringla* already tells us that the mode of disposal of the dead differed in successive periods of the distant past; burning of the dead is stated to antedate burial, and a distinction is drawn between the usage in Denmark and in the other two countries. Archæological finds show in the main graves from the stone age, and traces of burning from the bronze age, but a sharp line of demarcation does not exist. The transitions are gradual. On the island of Bornholm, as well as elsewhere, remains of burnt bodies are found with implements made exclusively of stone, while at the side of buried warriors occur bronze weapons.[1]

While we may not, therefore, attribute this change to a sudden or a general upheaval, it is yet obvious that a different attitude of mind must be assumed to exist in a people who value the preservation of the body from those who regard its annihilation as the very condition of a happy life hereafter. In the stone age the body was placed in the ground, covered with a large stone, or put into a stone coffin, or in later times in large tombs. With the bronze period burning came into vogue, which, according to Grimm,[2] was intended as a burnt sacrifice to the gods. It is more satisfactory, however, to see in this observance indications of a belief in a separate existence of the soul, which is freed by the burning of the body, — an idea expressed in Goethe's *Braut von Corinth:*

> Open up my wretched tomb for pity,
> . . . . . .
> When the ashes glow,
> When the fire-sparks flow,
> To the ancient gods aloft we soar.[3]

[1] E. Vedel, *Bornholms Oldtidsminder og Oldsager* (1886).
[2] J. Grimm, *Ueber das Verbrennen der Leichen* (*Kl. Schr.*, II).
[3] Translation of Aytoun and Martin.

In the iron age, however, we again find burial in use, at least for the wealthy, in large mounds. It might be supposed that from these various forms of disposal of the dead we could deduce the conceptions entertained in regard to the regions inhabited by the soul after death: those buried being supposed to dwell in an abode on or under the earth, while those burnt ascended to an upper world. But history does not confirm this view. Whereas the ancient Egyptian kings were laid to rest in pyramids or graves cut out from the rocks, their souls journeyed away in the sun ship and visited regions celestial as well as subterranean. On the other hand, Patroclus in the *Iliad* desires that his corpse be properly burnt so that he may not suffer any harm in Hades. Nothing, therefore, as to the conceptions of the prehistoric Teutons concerning the abode of the souls can be deduced from their mode of disposal of the dead.

Nor can conclusions be based on the implements and other objects found in and near the graves, inasmuch as it is not clear how far these were intended as sacrificial offerings for the dead, or were given them with a view of caring for their needs in the abode of souls. In the graves of the earlier iron age few weapons are found, but much that was to serve in eating and drinking, — a clear indication that at this time the chief occupation in the hereafter was held to be not fighting, but feasting.

More light seems to be shed by the symbols that are frequently met with on stones, rocks, grave urns, weapons, and implements. Among these are the *Helleristninger* (rock tracings) found cut in the granite rocks of Sweden (especially in Bohuslän), in Norway, and, to a lesser extent, in Denmark. In addition we find such symbols as hammer, T, wheel, ⊕, rectangular cross (*fylfot*), and triangle (*triskele*). While most of these designations belong to the iron age, that is to say, to the historical period, in part they revert doubtless to the periods of

stone and bronze. The rectangular cross and the triangle are found in the North in the bronze age, and on the whole their distribution throughout the world coincides fairly well with that of the burning of the dead. In any case, the rectangular cross (*croix gammée*, *Hakenkreuz*) and the ansate cross (*croix ansée*) are each confined to definite districts, the latter to Egypt and Western Asia, the former to India (*svastika*) and the whole of Europe.

These results furnish some additional evidence with regard to the connection and intercourse between the peoples of the North and those of Southern Europe, but they shed no light on the signification of the symbols themselves. With some degree of probability the wheel and rectangular cross have been interpreted as symbolical of the sun.[1] Far more doubtful is a supposed connection with individual deities. While in a later period the hammer is the well-nigh inseparable attribute of Thor, and the triangular cross was here and there interpreted as symbolical of the three chief gods, Odhin, Thor, and Freyr, there is nothing to show that this connection was original.

The most important question of all, that which concerns the use and purpose of these symbols, is also the most difficult to answer. Frequently, no doubt, they were of a purely ornamental character, but originally they must nevertheless have been made with some useful purpose in view. It is likely that magic power was attributed to them, but we are in the dark as to the exact nature of this power. Did they serve to ward off evil, to bring a blessing, and to secure the protection of some particular divinity? The case in hand illustrates in a striking manner how little is gained by the use of such words as "magic" and "amulet," when we can only hazard a guess as to the character of the thoughts and feelings that lie at their basis.

We have now reached the border-line separating the prehistoric from the historic, and might, therefore, consider the

[1] Goblet d'Alviella, *La migration des symboles* (1891).

present chapter closed. But, on the one hand, the dividing line between these two periods is by no means sharply drawn, and, on the other hand, the light shed by the monuments on the centuries that may be called the twilight of history is of the same indistinct, hazy character as that of the preceding period. We should hence be separating what is homogeneous, if we did not here add what may be gathered from the monuments for the centuries that follow.

First of all, the coins demand our attention; Roman, Byzantine, and, later on, Cufic coins, have been found in large numbers along the Baltic, on the Danish islands, and in the southern parts of Sweden and Norway. They testify to the existence of trade routes from Southern to Northern Europe, from the first centuries of our era; trade routes not by way of the western islands, but through Germany and Russia, by way of the Oder and Vistula. They furnish, therefore, a confirmation of what we already know concerning the channels along which the bronze and amber trade of the prehistoric era moved. In the North itself money was first coined in the tenth century.

Of more importance are the signs and representations found on monuments, with and without runes, on ornaments, and on the so-called bracteates, thin golden plates chased on one side and at times used as necklaces. These bracteates date from the sixth or seventh century onward; some have come down from the Viking period. The so-called Runic Monuments have been found in every part of the Teutonic world. They are most common in the Scandinavian countries, but are also of frequent occurrence in England and Germany. Even in so distant a place as Bucharest, a Gothic, and at Charnay — in a so-called Merovingian grave — a Burgundian, ornament with runes have been found. The runic alphabet of twenty-four signs (*i.e.* the older one, futhark, found on the bracteate of Vadstena, and elsewhere) again yields testimony of the same general character as that which we have before had occasion

to note; these written signs reached the North from the South, — in the present instance Italy, — not through direct communication, but by gradual transmission from tribe to tribe.

We cannot here enter upon a discussion of these runic signs. Some attention must, however, be paid to the figures and scenes depicted on the objects mentioned, inasmuch as some authorities are disposed to attach great importance to them. In the years 1639 and 1734, respectively, there were found in Southern Jutland two large golden horns. At the beginning of the present century they were unfortunately converted into bullion, but we are still able to judge of them from drawings and descriptions.[1] These horns, dating according to Worsaae from the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century, were held to show, after the manner of a mythological picture book, the following persons and objects: Thor, Freyr, Odhin, Freyja with the necklace Brisingamen, Hel, Walhalla with the *Einherjar* engaged in combat, and finally the tree Yggdrasil; in the centre several scenes from the myths of Baldr and Loki were recognized. If the origin of these precious horns is really to be assigned to so early a date, then their evidence is of great importance. In that case it would appear that the North about the year 500 already possessed a splendid cult and a connected body of myths of gods. The conceptions of this early period would show a most remarkable agreement with medieval Norse mythology in its fully developed form, and the latter would therefore have existed in the North in a practically unchanged state, from the period of migrations onward. All that has been said concerning the later and foreign origin of this mythology would accordingly be refuted by the evidence of these horns. What is even more significant, the very elements that scholars are at present inclined to regard more and more as later addi-

[1] Compare Ole Worm, *Mon. Danica;* Stephens, *Old Northern Runic Monuments;* Worsaae, *Nordens Forhistorie*, pp. 161 ff.; Sophus Müller, *Nordische Altertumskunde*, II, IX.

tions, Walhalla and Yggdrasil, are made to appear especially prominent on these horns. But all these deductions rest on an extremely insecure foundation. We possess only the pictorial representations, and these, unaccompanied as they are by an explanatory text, permit equally well the allegorical interpretation of old Ole Worm as the mythical one of Worsaae. There is no evidence of any consequence that these figures really represent Norse mythology. With fully as much inherent probability Sophus Müller recognizes foreign motifs in them. Even though the horns in question, therefore, are, like the silver kettle found in Jutland in 1891, to be assigned to an even earlier date than does Worsaae, — something that is quite within the range of possibilities, — they would in no wise vindicate the ancient character of Norse myths, but rather point to that same connection with the culture of Central and Southern Europe to which reference has repeatedly been made.

Nor can much more be gained from other pictorial representations, of which we possess more or less detailed descriptions and investigations. On Swedish rocks are found scenes from the Sigurd Saga, on an Anglo-Saxon rune casket, scenes from the Wieland Saga. The former are of uncertain date, but both show how wide a circulation these motifs had attained. Two English monuments, the so-called Ruthwell Cross[1] and the Gosforth Cross,[2] show a curious admixture of pagan and Christian motifs. Still other monuments might be mentioned, but they would not alter the final result.

If then we sum up what is actually known concerning the prehistoric period, it appears that the monuments do not allow us to draw any safe conclusions as to "origins." Archæology

[1] Stephens (*Runic Monuments*, I, 405) assigns it to the seventh, Sweet (*Oldest English Texts*, p. 125) to the eighth century.

[2] On the Gosforth Cross, see Stephens, *Bugge's Studies on Northern Mythology, shortly examined* (London, 1884), and Bugge, *The Home of the Eddic Poems* (translated by W. H. Schofield, London, 1899), Introduction, p. lxiv. Bugge assigns it to the ninth century.

teaches us that as far north as Sweden there dwelt a Teutonic population some thousands of years before the Christian era. At a very early period these tribes borrowed, if not directly yet extensively, from the cultured nations of Southern Europe. The undulatory motion through which material objects as well as the products of man's skill passed from one country to another no doubt followed various roads and was more rapid at one time than at another. It required more than nine hundred years before Christianity reached Scandinavia in this manner. The dwellings, graves, household utensils, and weapons indicate to some extent the material conditions prevailing in these prehistoric times and the degree of practical skill acquired by the population. We may safely assume that alongside of such objects as were imported there had also arisen a more or less free imitation and appropriation of ideas, but we possess no criterion for discriminating between the one and the other. With regard to the thoughts and feelings of these people we are thrown back upon conjectures, with inherent probabilities and analogies as our sole guides.

Nor is the testimony of the monuments from the historical period at all of a certain character. Evidence that would at first blush seem to argue in favor of the originality of Norse mythology appears in a different light as soon as it is more closely examined. While much points to a dependence on Southern Europe, this applies more to ornamentation and art than to religion and mythology. What may be gleaned from the monuments for the study of Teutonic mythology is extremely meagre.

CHAPTER IV

TRIBES AND PEOPLES

1. "The language of a people constitutes a far more potent witness concerning them than is afforded by bones, weapons, or graves."[1] "The significant periods in the existence of a people, with the consequent changes, — now rapid and violent, now slow and gradual, — are bound to leave so indelible an impress on the language as to betray the traces of every past event, in short of its entire history."[2]

These are the words of Grimm and Müllenhoff, the two great masters of Teutonic philology. One might accordingly infer, as has in fact been done, that linguistic science furnishes, in the hands of trained and painstaking scholars, positive results concerning the remote past, including prehistoric times. And yet such has not proved to be the case, even as regards the work of these eminent scholars. J. Grimm stoutly maintained that Getæ and Daci were identical with Goths and Danes. Through the annexation of these "Thracian" tribes, it was supposed that our knowledge of the Teutonic prehistoric period could be carried back much further than was formerly considered possible. No student of linguistics entertains such views now; and though the edifice reared by Müllenhoff may perhaps rest on a more secure foundation, still more than one of its supporting stones has also been loosened. He enunciated the correct principle that the origins of national existence in the case of the Indo-European peoples are to be sought in their historic abodes.[3] He held the region between the Oder and the Vistula

[1] J Grimm, GddS. I, 5. [2] K. Müllenhoff, DA. III, 194.
[3] DA. III, 168.

to be the mother country of the Teutons, and the land in which the Teutonic language first acquired an individual character. The former of these assertions is undoubtedly correct, the latter highly probable. On the other hand, results that Müllenhoff considered equally well established, such as the pastoral character of the life of the ancient Aryans, a supposed foreign aboriginal population in Europe, a close kinship between Teutons and Letto-Slavs, and many other points, have been in large part rejected by more recent students of language.

Not only in respect to details, but also as regards matters of prime importance, has the confidence that was so readily bestowed upon the results of linguistic science been rudely shaken. The study of language was thought to enlighten us concerning the original home of the common ancestors of the Indo-European family. At present no scholar ventures to speak with any degree of positiveness concerning either this original home or this primitive people.

The cradle of the Indo-European family has been sought in various localities,— in Bactria, Armenia, and other parts of Asia, and even in Europe, from Southern Russia to Southern Sweden. There is some support for each of these views, but for none of them are direct proofs available. Most idyllic pictures were drawn of the material and intellectual culture of this primitive race : the family life of these patriarchal shepherds was marked by great purity, and the shining sky was worshipped as the heavenly father. As the knights in the fairy tales, were they thought to have entered upon the stage of history, with horses and chariots, subjugating or dispossessing everywhere the people of inferior race. When this theory was first broached, doubts arose in some quarters as to the possibility of ascribing to the ancient Italians and Teutons in their primitive condition such a pure and relatively high degree of culture, but the certainty of linguistic results seemed to dispose of all objections.

The more than fifty years that have elapsed since the beginnings of these scientific studies have somewhat disillusioned men's minds. The laws of sound-change in language have been far more sharply and accurately formulated, and as a consequence a number of etymologies that at one time seemed established have now been abandoned. Moreover, together with the laws of sound-change, more attention has been paid to the meaning of words, which have often in the course of time been considerably modified. Finally, scholars have come to recognize the fact that sameness is not always to be explained on the score of unity of origin, but may also be due to borrowing. What is common to a number of languages is therefore by no means always original. No one, for example, would conclude from the sameness in all European languages of such words as "church" and "school," "priest" and "bishop," "bible" and "altar," that the Indo-European primitive race was acquainted with Christianity.[1]

In this way the ancestral inheritance, which was held to have been the common possession of the whole Indo-European stock, has greatly dwindled. The happy days when every new etymology seemed to add to that inheritance have forever passed away. With the linguistic principles that formed its foundation, the structure itself has collapsed. The one great result of linguistic science, however, the unity of the Indo-European family, still stands. Not only has it in no way suffered in the general downfall, but recent methods of study have even served to confirm the theory. At present, the comparison, instead of being made between single disjointed words, is made between entire groups of designations of beings and objects of a similar nature, and it is such correspondences which are held to demonstrate a common origin. Questions concerning the mother country and the primitive race have to a large extent been dismissed. We no longer suppose that in

[1] The illustration is taken from Vodskov, *Sjæled. og naturd.*, CXXVIII.

a certain prehistoric period an Indo-European primitive people dwelt in a definite locality and from there spread over the earth in groups.

It is evident that with such conceptions there does not remain much scope for an Indo-European mythology. We no longer ask ourselves: What gods and myths did the Teutons take with them as an inheritance from their ancestral home? Loose parallels count for nothing, and similarities of names no longer mislead. Tacitus, for example, mentions the existence among a Teutonic tribe of the cult of two brothers, whom he compares with Castor and Pollux. Now the heroic saga also shows the figures of the Hartungen, and the question might therefore present itself whether in this mythical motif of Dioscuri or Açvins, which is also encountered outside of Indo-European territory, a fragment of original Indo-European mythology has not been preserved. The Teutonic Æsir, the Irish Esir, have been identified by some scholars with the Indian Asuras, but here the connection and similarity are again very doubtful. It is not even certain that the Indian Asuras are truly Indo-European; it has been suggested that they are Semitic in origin. Amid all these storms of doubt and conjecture, the old Indo-European god of the sky seemed to stand firm as a rock, Tiu being considered cognate with Dyaus, Zeus, and Jupiter. But even this equation has not escaped the scalpel of some more recent, relentless grammarians. That Tiu bears the same name as the other sky divinities is at present denied by several scholars of authority, although there are other voices of equal weight that still uphold the old theory.

We should, however, be on our guard here against misunderstandings. The view that the individual peoples, among them the Teutons, set out from the common ancestral home with a stock of culture and mythology has been abandoned; and with this also the problem of tracing this common original possession by means of linguistic science. However, this does

not exclude the view that the worship of the sky god was primitive among the Teutons, as among other peoples of the same family, as it was, in fact, among Mongols and Semites.

These remarks are not intended to detract from the value and importance of linguistic science for the study of ancient peoples; but this value has assumed a different aspect from that which obtained when the school of comparative mythologists based its results on linguistic studies. Through the progress made in the study of language, these *quasi*-results have been shown to be ill-founded. Withal, the study of language still remains our chief guide in the investigation of prehistoric and of the earliest historic times. By the side of the "genealogical theory" it has placed the "wave theory," that is to say, it does not, as formerly, ask us to assume that individual peoples spread over the face of the earth equipped with a full stock of knowledge, but rather emphasizes the importance of the historical connections through which one tribe exerts an influence upon a neighboring one. This gulf stream of civilization we have already had occasion to mention. What is common in the life of different peoples is as much the result of historic contact as of unity of descent. Such a view accounts better for existing facts and conditions; and while it modifies, it in no wise lessens, the value of linguistic study.

The contradictions between the results of archæological and linguistic inquiry also disappear of their own accord. If the linguistic method of the comparative school of mythologists were sound, it would be impossible to regard the prehistoric population, who have left behind them the material remains which we have discovered, as Indo-Europeans, and we should furthermore be involved in the difficulty of having to assume that the Teutonic tribes mentioned by Tacitus, and even the Cimbri and Teutones defeated by Marius, already carried about with them the entire system of "Indo-European" mythology. The latter inference we could at any rate not escape. No such

chasm lies between these two fields of investigation in the present state of our knowledge, although the two sciences continue to yield results differing in kind. If archæology chooses to regard the lake dwellers as Indo-Europeans, linguistic science does not interpose a veto. We no longer demand that language study should furnish us with an outline picture of a vague, nebulous primitive people. On the other hand, it frequently enables us to trace historical connections between different peoples.

2. We have no definite knowledge concerning the first migration of the Teutons. We know neither when it took place nor the immediate occasion that brought it about. It was tempting to some scholars to connect this migration with the expedition of the Persians under Darius to Scythia. Müllenhoff holds that the origin of the Teutonic people in the region between the Vistula and Oder is of as early a date as the first settlements of the other Indo-European groups in Greece and Italy. However, we really know nothing about this, just as we are entirely uninformed concerning the motives which induced the Teutons to settle in lands so inhospitable as to prompt Tacitus to declare that it was incredible that any people should have forsaken a more favored abode for such a wild region with so raw a climate.

From the shores of the Baltic the Teutons spread, principally in a western direction. They were not shepherds; the land, covered with forest and swamp, was entirely unsuited to grazing. It was only gradually, as scant crops rewarded their labors, that they became acquainted with the elements of agriculture. Even in the time of Tacitus, salt could be obtained in the interior only through the application of the most primitive methods, and the tribes waged war for the possession of the saline streams. The climate and their manner of life made these tribes hardy and warlike, but the conditions essential to the development of an indigenous civilization were lacking.

Such a civilization arose on the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates, but not on the Oder and Elbe, nor on the Rhine and the Danube. From the very outset the Teutons borrowed whatever culture they acquired from more highly developed peoples with whom they had directly or indirectly come into contact. The results reached by archæological investigation are thus borne out by the character of the country and the nature of the soil. The study of language too has in various ways thrown light on the foreign relations of the ancient Teutons, and more especially on the contact with Kelts and Romans.

The value of linguistic science is not limited to tracing such external relations. The history of a language, with its various phonological and morphological changes, enables us to distinguish its periods of development; and we are accordingly led to divide the Teutons into two, or rather three, main groups. To the East-Teutonic group belong the languages of the Goths (East and West), as well as those of the Vandals and Burgundians, though of the two latter scarcely any remains have been preserved. To the North-Teutonic languages, which must be regarded as a separate group, belong Swedish and Danish on the one hand, and Old Norse (in Norway and Iceland) on the other. The largest group is the West-Teutonic; it embraces Anglo-Saxon and Frisian, Low and High German with their various dialects — such as Saxon, Frankish, Bavarian, Alemannic, etc. This division of tribes and peoples into groups furnishes a secure basis also for a study of the history of religion.

It would be in vain to attempt to elicit the same results from what Roman authors tell us concerning Teutonic tribes. While it was undoubtedly the intention of Tacitus in setting up a threefold division — Ingævones, Herminones, and Istævones — to embrace the entire people, as a matter of fact his classification includes only the West Teutons. But Tacitus does not

adhere strictly to this division. With the words "quidam affirmant"[1] he introduces other names: Marsi, Gambrivi, Suevi, Vandili, — all of which are also to be regarded as groups; and what is still more significant, in his treatment of the individual peoples he entirely loses sight of his own main grouping. In his treatment of the tribes best known to him he follows an order from the West to North and East, distinguishing at the same time the Suabian from the non-Suabian peoples. Pliny mentions five groups, adding to those of Tacitus the Vandili and the Peucini or Bastarnæ, along the coast of the Black Sea, whom Tacitus had classed among the doubtful frontier tribes. We encounter the Hellusii (who in Tacitus are lost in the mists of the North) in the Hilleviones of Pliny. Among the names of the separate tribes in Tacitus there are some which subsequently disappear from view: the Bructeri, Cherusci, Semnones, Nahanarvali, etc. Others endure: Suabians, Frisians, Angles, and Lombards. New names also put in an appearance in later times: Alemanni, Burgundians, — the latter already mentioned by Pliny and Ptolemy, — Saxons, and Franks. The value of the ethnographic material furnished by Roman authors is of course unquestioned, apparent contradictions being in part due to the lack of sufficient data. Thus we find Tacitus distinguishing between what he knew with certainty and what he had from hearsay. Furthermore, during the centuries covered by the Roman accounts extensive changes were taking place in the interior of Germany. Tribes were alternately vanishing and again appearing upon the scene or seeking new habitations, and with the help of the geographies, maps, and historians we now and then catch a glimpse of these great shiftings. Besides, the peculiarly Roman point of view and attitude of mind have colored the accounts; so doubtless in case of the grouping into five or into three main divisions. This grouping is a geographical one; the Romans naturally

[1] "Some declare."

taking as their point of departure the West. One may conclude from the words of Tacitus that the memory of the three sons of Mannus, the progenitors of the three groups, was still kept alive in old songs of the Teutons themselves, as is in fact indicated by the alliteration of their names ; but it is after all by no means certain that the Teutons themselves intended by these groups a complete division of all tribes. The Frankish roll of nations, too, does not prove anything in favor of the old tradition. It makes Romans, Britons, Franks, and Alemanni the four offshoots from the common ancestor Istio, thus reflecting the political and geographical conditions existing in the time of Chlodowech (A.D. 520).

Valuable therefore as the accounts of Roman historians and geographers are, inasmuch as they transport us to a period concerning which we possess few reliable data, their classification of the Teutons does not coincide with the grouping based on the criteria of language. The North-Teutonic (Scandinavian) group remains almost wholly outside the Roman horizon, and even the East Teutons, who subsequently played the chief rôle in the migrations of nations (Goths, Vandals, Burgundians), are only incidentally mentioned.

Much attention has of late years been bestowed on the signification of the tribal names, and while this line of investigation has neither yielded positive results nor proved very fruitful in advancing our knowledge of Teutonic religion, it is a phase of the subject which must not be passed by in silence. J. Grimm[1] distinguished three kinds of tribal names. The first class consists of patronymics, such as Herminones from Irmin and Goths from Gaut. The question at once presents itself, Which of the two is original, — the name of the tribe or that of the eponymous hero? If we accept the former alternative, the name of the tribe remains unexplained. A second class, the most numerous of all, indicates qualities: Frisians,

[1] GddS., Chapter XXIX.

Franks (free men), Lombards (Longobardi). Under this head Grimm ventures a number of bold conjectures, — *e.g.* when he explains the Suabians (Suebi) as men who are *sui juris*. The third class comprises tribes named from the district which they inhabited: Ubii, Ripuarii, Batavi (men from the *Auen*), Mattiaci (men from the *Matten*), Semnones (forest dwellers). Here too the correct interpretation of the names is frequently subject to doubt. In fact most of the problems raised in this connection still remain unsolved. In the case of each particular name the question presents itself whether it was originally native or whether it was given to the tribe by neighbors. Probably there are quite a number of nicknames and encomiastic names among them. Reference to a cult is found only in the name Ziuwari, borne by the Suabians. The attempt has been made to explain Ansivari in a similar manner, and the Nahanarvali have even been regarded as worshippers of the Norns, but both of these etymologies are undoubtedly incorrect. It is worth noticing that among the tribal names no designations of plants or animals occur; for the Chatti (Hessians) have, of course, no connection with cats.

We may define more sharply, if not the origin, at least the use, of the words "germanisch" and "deutsch." As to the derivation of the term "Germanus" the most fantastic theories are current. Most probably the name originated in Northeastern Gaul in the century preceding our era, be it that the Kelts called the foreigners "neighbors" or that they were called "the genuine," in contradistinction to the peoples in whose midst they lived. The designation *deutsch* is related to the word "people" (Gothic *thiuda*) and means *vulgaris*. It reminds one of the ancient "Teutones," which is probably derived from the same stem. Little, indeed, is definitely known of these Teutones, who together with the Cimbri were the first Teutonic peoples that came within the Roman horizon. Müllenhoff seeks their origin along the Middle Elbe, whereas more recent

scholars are convinced from an inscription found on a boundary stone at Miltenberg on the Main, on which their name occurs, that the Teutones were originally a Keltic tribe.[1] However that may be, the name "deutsch" came before A.D. 800 to be used of the language[2] and has since the ninth century steadily gained in currency, both as a designation for the language of the people, *lingua Theodisca*, and for the people itself.

It is unfortunate that between the words "germanisch" and "deutsch" no fixed and uniform distinction is made. As a rule, *germanisch* is the more general term, embracing the entire family — Germans, Goths, Anglo-Saxons, and Scandinavians. The tribes and peoples inhabiting Germany are called *deutsch* in the narrower sense. We therefore speak of the language of Germany as *deutsch*, but of *germanische Philologie*, in the comprehensive sense in which, for example, Paul uses it in his *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*. This usage is, however, subject to exceptions in view of the fact that the Romans called the Germans and other tribes all *Germani*. Jacob Grimm has added to the confusion by using the word "germanisch" only rarely, and by employing "deutsch" sometimes in the narrower, and again in the more comprehensive, sense. In English the terms "German" (*deutsch*) and "Dutch" (*niederländisch*) have acquired in everyday speech a special signification, so that for the whole field the name "Teutonic" has been used. This usage is again not uniform, some preferring "Germanic" (*germanisch*), but this is open to the objection that it does not admit of the formation of a corresponding substantive. In any case, it is essential that we should carefully note the usage of others and be ourselves consistent in the employment of the various terms. In the present treatise "Teutonic" will be used for the entire group, "German" for the special subdivision.

[1] Müllenhoff, DA. II, 282; compare also Kossinna in *Westdeutsche Zs.*, IX, 213; R. Much, PBB. XVII, and elsewhere.

[2] A. Dove, *Das älteste Zeugniss für den Namen Deutsch* (SMA. 1895).

The names that we have just mentioned constitute only a very small part of the large stock of proper names, of persons as well as of places, that have come down to us. While these are important witnesses in ascertaining ancient conditions and interrelations, they must yet be used cautiously and judiciously. A proper name does indeed tell us as a rule to what language group it belongs, but it does not tell us whether the people that gave it or bore it dwelt in the place where they left this token of their presence as strangers or as natives, as rulers or slaves, whether permanently or for only a brief period.

For the study of religion the numerous names derived from gods, especially in the North, and the names of persons deserve attention.[1] They frequently enable us to determine approximately how far certain legends and cults had spread.[2] From proper names we know that the worship of Thor was far more deeply rooted in Norway than that of Odhin. That Baldr is almost totally absent from names is a fact of great importance in arriving at an estimate of myths connected with him. A number of proper names testify to the currency of the German heroic saga in England. Proper names, accordingly, reflect not only the possession of each individual tribe, but also the intercourse of the tribes with one another.

Our knowledge of the various tribal religions of the ancient Teutons is derived from their names, their genealogies, their tribal legends, and the accounts of Roman authors. To the reader of Tacitus no fact appears more evident than that the individual tribes had each their own religious centre, that at times a few neighboring or related tribes united to form a common cult, and that the main groups in their old songs glorified their tribal progenitor, who was probably a tribal god.

[1] Compare Weinhold, *Altnordisches Leben*, pp. 270 ff.

[2] Examples of monographs in which the evidence from names has been exploited are, among others: Henry Petersen, *Om Nordboernes Gudedyrkelse og Gudetro i Hedenold* (1876); G. Binz, *Zeugnisse zur Germanischen Sage in England*, PBB. XX; Müllenhoff, *Zeugnisse und Excurse*.

Since the publication of an investigation by Müllenhoff [1] it has usually been assumed that the three great groups mentioned by Tacitus had separate cults. The *Irminsleute* (Herminones) preserved the worship of the old heaven god Zio; the Ingvæones worshipped the Vanir god Freyr; the Istvæones, Wodan and Tamfana. The identification of the eponymous tribal hero with the great gods is in two or three instances more or less probable: Irmin-Tiu and Ingv-Freyr frequently occur in combination, whereas this is not the case with Istv and Wodan. Teutonic mythologists in proposing such an identification of a hero with a god, or of one god with another, go on the theory that what is seemingly a proper name is in truth only a surname, the hero or god of lower rank being regarded as an hypostasis of the higher god. That one and the same god is worshipped under various names is, indeed, not a rare occurrence, but in the case of an identification of a hero with a god, a greater degree of caution is required. Taken as a whole, the conjectures here referred to rest on an insufficient basis.

Many scholars expressed the opinion that this investigation of Müllenhoff had resulted in establishing a new basis for the study of Teutonic mythology, and to a certain extent this is actually the case. Müllenhoff himself never denied the existence of elements of belief that were common to all Teutonic peoples. On the contrary, the range within which he allowed this view was wider than at present seems admissible, but the results obtained by Müllenhoff do not constitute as great an advance as at first appeared to be the case. We have already seen that the division into three groups does not by any means embrace all Teutons. Thus the Suebi, who, it will be remembered, were styled Ziuwari, correspond only in part to the Herminones. Furthermore, the lines of demarcation between groups and tribes are not so sharp as might seem to be implied in the classifications made. Internal conditions of affairs in

[1] *Irmin und seine Brüder* (ZfdA. XXIII, 1878).

Germania were in a constant state of flux, and this necessarily affected the life and existence of the tribes. In addition, account must be taken of that intercourse between the various tribes through which one tribe could borrow legends and cults from another.

Some students of Teutonic mythology cherish the ideal of treating the mythology of each tribe separately, and the historical method would indeed seem to demand this. If no such attempt is made in the present instance, it is not merely because we are deterred by the meagreness of the data available for such a separate treatment, but even more largely on account of the further consideration that it is impossible to detach with a sufficient degree of certainty a tribe or group from its environment. The historical method itself cautions us against ignoring any part of the data at our command, such as that which concerns the mutual intercourse of the tribes. We may attempt to determine here and there the origin of a legend and the chief seat of a cult, but we have no right to deny to a tribe what we do not find expressly predicated of it, in case we find it existing among other tribes. The main principle, at any rate, remains undisputed, and we may feel confident of the positive result that the central point around which the life of an individual tribe revolved was the worship of a definite god together with the tribal legends with which it brought its origin into close connection.

3. In these tribal legends various elements, in part of later origin, are intermingled. It is convenient, however, to treat them in the present connection. If we analyze the tribal legends we find: 1. Myths concerning the origin of man in general, connected more or less closely with accounts of the ancestors of a particular people. 2. Accounts relating to, or an enumeration of, eponymous heroes; or genealogical tables which derive the royal families from ancient heroes or gods. 3. Legends concerning ancient adventures — largely expeditions

or migrations of the tribes. 4. Various foreign traditions derived from the biblical or the classical world. In the picture that the individual tribes draw of their origin these threads are woven together in various ways.

We find even Tacitus bringing the origin of the tribes into connection with the origin of man. The progenitors of the three groups (*Germania*, Chapter 2) are the sons of Mannus, the man, and the latter is himself the son of Tuisto, whom Tacitus designates as "deum terra editum."[1] To infer from this name, Tuisto, that he was of a dual nature and was conceived as an hermaphrodite is unwarranted. The emphasis falls on the autochthonous character and on the divine ancestry, which, it may be noted, are again expressly mentioned in the case of the other tribes. Nothing beyond this can be deduced from the words of Tacitus. This applies also to a recent most arbitrary emendation of the text of Tacitus,[2] according to which man had sprung from trees. Völuspa 17, to be sure, and Gylfaginning 9, as well, make man originate from Ask and Embla (ash and elm?), but this, as well as the descent of the three classes — thræl, karl, and jarl — from the god Rig (Heimdallr, in Rigsthula), is found only in comparatively late Eddic songs.

We shall begin our treatment of the separate peoples with the Goths. Their royal family, that of the Amali (among the East Goths), is regarded as of divine descent, the genealogical series being Gaut, Haimdal, Rigis, Amal.[3] There is no way of determining from this list whether Gaut is simply an eponymous hero or, as has been assumed, another name for Wodan. Rigis, here separated from Haimdal, is elsewhere usually a surname of this god. Jordanes, to whom we owe this

1 "A god that had issued from the earth."

2 It is to be acknowledged that in the phrase "originem gentis conditoresque" the last word strikes one as strange, but to read, with J. Holub ("Der erste Germane wurde auch nach dem Zeugnisse des Tacitus aus der Esche gebildet") (1891), "caudicem orni hosque fuisse" is entirely fantastic.

3 Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, Chapters 4, 14, 17.

account of the divine origin of the Amali, makes the Goths come from Scandza, the cradle of nations ("quasi officina gentium aut certe velut vagina nationum"), an island in the North, where it is too cold for bees to gather honey, but from which place nations have spread like swarms of bees. In three ships the Goths crossed the ocean, the foremost two carrying the East and West Goths, the slower one the Gepidæ. Landing on the coast, these tribes moved onward in a southern direction.

The Lombards were also said to have come from the "island" of Scandinavia. Their real name, it is said, was Vinili, and they constituted the third part of the inhabitants of this overpopulated country. They had been designated by lot to leave their fatherland, and under two leaders, Ibor and Ajo, they sought new homes. They came into collision with the Vandals, who implored Godan (Wodan) for victory over the newcomers, but the god replied that he would give victory to those whom his eyes should first behold at sunrise. The crafty Gambara, the mother of Ibor and Ajo, sought counsel from Frea, who gave the advice that the women should join the men and let their hair hang down their faces like beards. When on the following morning Godan saw this host of Vinili, he asked: "Who are these Longobardi?" and Frea rejoined that having given them their name he must also grant them the victory.[1] According to this account, which the Christian historian of the Lombards calls an absurd story, this people is traced back to the Baltic. Whether the mention of the divinities Wodan and Frea is to be regarded as an original element in this account has been doubted by some scholars.

The genealogical tables tracing the origin of rulers and peoples to eponymous heroes or gods — the Goths to Gaut, the

[1] Paulus Diaconus, Chapters 1–8. According to Ranke (Paulus Diaconus, in his complete works, Vol. LI, pp. 81–84), we possess the narrative of this *Namengebung* in four versions, of which the Christian-theistic one (Procopius, *B. Goth.*, II, Chapter 14), in which Wodan and Frea are not mentioned as yet, appears to be the most original.

Scyldings to Scyld, the Scefings to Sceaf, and possibly the Batavi to a Bætva (?) — are known to us in detail in the case of the Anglo-Saxons in England only. Bede[1] himself tells us that Hengist and Horsa, and the royal families of many English nations as well, were descended from Voden. The medieval English chronicles, with variations as to details, give us these genealogies of the Anglo-Saxon royal families, and these tables, dating from various periods, contain side by side with historical reminiscences also some fragments of myths and legends. The lists that have been compiled are largely the result of poetic fancy. Now and then they furnish investigators with a clew towards tracing a connection between traditions and episodes that lie seemingly far apart; so in the case of the two kings named Offa, and of such heroes as Beow (Beaw), Scyld, and Scef (Sceaf). Of the latter it was related that he landed, as a new-born babe, in a rudderless boat and with a *sheaf* of grain, on the coast of Sleswick, the country over which he was afterwards to rule. The tables contain few traces of legends that are of native English origin, and almost every feature points to a connection with the original home in Holstein, Sleswick, and Jutland. The tables ascend to Woden as progenitor; that his name is at times found in the middle of the list is probably owing to later additions. Of the other divinities Seaxneat (Saxnot) occurs a few times, as for example in the Essex table, where a number of names representing personifications of the idea of battle are all designated as sons of Seaxneat.[2] Names compounded with Frea are numerous. That Baldæg, who is mentioned repeatedly, is Balder is confirmed by the name Balder itself as found in one of the genealogies. In passing

[1] Bede, *Hist. eccl. gent. Angl.*, I, 15.

[2] So Müllenhoff, *Beovulf* (1889), pp. 7, 64, etc., where valuable comments on the genealogies may be found. The names, with Müllenhoff's interpretations, are the following: Gesecg and Andsecg (Symmachos and Antimachos), Sveppa (one who causes a turmoil), Sigefugel (favorable omen), Hethca and Bedeca (men of bloodshed and destruction).

it may be noted that some of the chroniclers have felt called upon to trace the family back to the common ancestors Noah and Adam.

Several of the tribes in Germany proper are rich in legendary lore. So the Saxons, concerning whose origin various traditions are current.[1] According to one report their first king, Aschanes (Ask?), whose name the medieval chronicle changes to Ascanius, sprang up from the Harz rocks in a forest near a spring. A popular rime also makes mention of girls growing on trees in Saxony. Widukind of the tenth century, who entertained a warm affection for his Saxon people, was, however, of the opinion that they had come across the sea and mentions various accounts as to their origin; they were thought to be descended from the Danes and Norwegians, or were regarded as the remnants of the army of Alexander the Great which had scattered in all directions. Whether it would be possible to trace a connection between this Macedonian origin and Trojan descent need not here be discussed. Of more interest is the fact that this Saxon tribal legend, combined in part with the Thuringian, contains various semi-historical reminiscences; such as the war between Saxons and Thuringians for the possession of the country, the struggle between the Franks and Thuringians, whose king Irminfrid had married the daughter of a Frankish king, and especially the exploits of the Thuringian hero Iring, who played the chief rôle in this war and who is usually regarded as a mythical figure.

An unusually rich store of legends was found by Uhland among his "Suabians." According to an account of the twelfth century concerning the origin of the Suabians, the Suevi too, although in the days of Tacitus already possessing fixed habitations in Middle Germany, had come from the North. The cause of their exodus, as in the case of the Vinili and perhaps also of the Goths, is said to have been famine.

[1] Compare Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen*, Nrs. 413–416; Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, I.

That the legends also show a connection between Scandinavia and the Suebi, Uhland has attempted to show by citing a number of characteristic episodes from the saga of Helgi, whose connection with the Suebi does not rest merely on the accidental resemblance of Svava to Suebi.

We find in these various tribal sagas an unmistakable, though not historically definable, background of reality. Imperceptibly saga passes over into history, and the ancient saga too, nebulous and mingled with myths as it at times was, no doubt preserved recollections of an old mother country and of earlier fortunes. At times a tradition no doubt owes its origin solely to the attempt to explain a name, just as the inhabitants of the Swiss canton Schwyz thought that they had come from Sweden. In the case of some other accounts, we cannot even approximately state what the basis of reality is. An instance of this is the curious statement of Tacitus that Ulixes had landed somewhere along the Rhine and that an altar had been raised in honor of him and of his father Laertes. There is no doubt, however, that some of these legends are purely learned invention, without historical basis. In this latter category belong the tales, everywhere current in the Middle Ages, of the Trojan origin of various peoples.

Following, more or less closely, Vergil's account (*Æneid*, I, ll. 142 ff.) of Antenor, who had escaped from Troy and reached Illyria and more distant shores, stories of Trojan exiles who had made their way to remote regions and distant coasts were told in the various provinces of the Roman Empire; and when we remember how much value was attached by distinguished Roman families at the end of the Republic and at the beginning of the Empire to Trojan lineage, it will appear altogether natural that the nations incorporated with the Empire should have fallen in with this fashion and have boasted of Trojan descent. Our present sources no longer enable us to trace the details of the ways in which this tradition was carried out, but

it is clear that distinguished Gauls, more especially, and their successors the Franks traced their origin from Troy.

Gregory of Tours, to be sure, tells us nothing of this character in the dry and rather confused account in which he sums up what older writers had related of the fortunes of his people. He makes the Franks come from Pannonia and does not refer to any connection with Greeks or Trojans. We first come across this latter legend in the *Chronicle of Fredegar* (of about 660) and in the *Gesta regum Francorum* (725). According to the former, Priam at Troy was king of the Franks. After the fall of Troy the people repeatedly separated. One division went to Macedonia, another under king Friga (the Frigii) reached the Danube. Part of this division under Turchot (the Turks) remained behind, while others under Francio (the Franks) moved onward and began the construction of a new city of Troy on the Rhine, which was, however, never completed. Theudemer and, subsequently, the Merovingi are descended from this Francio. With a slight variation from the above account, the *Gesta* make Æneas the king of the Trojans. The Franks are descended from the Trojan exiles who built the city of Sicambria on the frontiers of Pannonia and subsequently aided the emperor Valentinianus in his war against the Alani (Alemanni?). From him they received the name of *Franks*, that is, the wild, proud people! In any case the tradition of the Trojan descent of the Franks had struck deep root. Paulus Diaconus thought that he recognized in the name of a Frankish *major domo*, Anschis, the Trojan name Anchises.

It is clear that these Frankish accounts do not represent native traditions, but merely form the continuation of threads that passed from Latin authors into the later literature. Nor is more value to be attached to what is related elsewhere during the Middle Ages of Trojan descent. The English highly prized the tradition, and even in Norse literature belief in it has assumed a characteristic form.

This whole cycle of legends is still unknown to Saxo Grammaticus, who does not seem to have heard of either Troy or Priam in this connection. He does indeed mention, but without signifying his own concurrence, the opinion of Dudo, a writer on Aquitanian history of the end of the tenth century, that the Danes derived their name from the Danai. Saxo also refers to an ancient king, Othinus, who had established relations with Byzantium, but he is unaware of any connection between Asia and Scandinavia.

The latter notion we meet in the Ynglinga Saga (*Heimskringla*) and in the Preface (of later origin) to the Prose Edda. Odhin is there said to have come to the North from Asgardh on the Black Sea, and the narratives of the Vanir war, of Mimir and Hœnir, are interwoven with the story of that journey. In the afore-mentioned Preface (*formáli*) Troy and the expedition of Pompey are referred to by name.

There was not the slightest cause for mistaking the true character of these tales by endeavoring to find genuine tradition in them, as has been done by some scholars. There is not even the least evidence that the ancient Norsemen were eager to connect their past with the classical world. The instances just mentioned stand isolated and are the work of mythographers, who, by combining various unrelated elements and overriding all chronology, constructed a pseudo-historical narrative devoid of all value from either the historical or the mythological point of view. It would be in vain to seek genuine fragments of Teutonic legends here.

4. Even in a brief survey some attention must be paid to the relations of the Teutons to other nations before and at the dawn of the historical period.

We shall probably never fully succeed in tracing the boundaries dividing Kelts from Teutons in the prehistoric times, or in determining the lands which each of these peoples originally occupied, or in fixing the tribes of which they were

composed.[1] However, linguistic investigations, more especially of names of places, have already shed considerable light upon the subject, and we now know that the whole west and south of Germany exhibit Keltic names. The Kelts in their various expeditions roamed also over the southern peninsulas of Europe, Spain, Italy, and Greece. These results are firmly established and cannot be affected by warning cries which have been raised against the extravagances of Kelto-mania. Such warnings are to a certain extent justified. Thus we cannot concur in the view of some scholars that the Kelts, or more especially the Gauls, were of old a highly civilized people, possessing great technical skill and a profound symbolism. At the same time there cannot be any doubt as to the wide extent of the territory covered by the Kelts in prehistoric times, or their superiority to their Teutonic neighbors in culture.

The original boundary between Kelts and Teutons was doubtless situated in the country between the Oder and Elbe. Müllenhoff locates it in the Harz and Thuringia, which would at once mark the boundary towards both the south and west. Nothing is known concerning the relations existing between these contiguous peoples in Central Germany, any more than concerning the causes for the advance of the Teutons and the manner in which it took place. Nor do we know to what extent the two peoples intermingled. It is clear, however, that they did mix in various ways, and that there was no such sharp line of division or such a mutual aversion between them as we must assume to have existed between Teutons and Slavs. In Central Germany, as subsequently on the Rhine, on the left as well as on the right bank, the contiguous Kelts and Teutons have assuredly not always waged war on each other, but have frequently lived in peaceful intercourse. This mutual influence

[1] Maps may be found in Müllenhoff's *Deutsche Altertumskunde* and in the article of R. Much, PBB. XVII. The former treats the Kelts and their expeditions very fully (DA. II).

was so strongly marked that it is not always possible to determine from the sources at our command whether in a particular case we have to do with a Teutonic or a Keltic tribe. In fact, during the first centuries of our era most of the tribes to the west of the Rhine do not bear an unmixed character.

It is evident that the Teutons reached the Rhine, and even crossed it, about the beginning of our era. Roman accounts, from Cæsar onward, as well as numerous inscriptions, inform us how Kelt and Teuton met in these regions. The question therefore naturally presents itself, What elements in their religion belong to each of the two peoples? From the nature of the case such a question can be fully answered only by a series of detailed investigations. Common characteristics do not, however, necessarily imply always either influence from the one side or the other, or borrowing. There is, for example, no reason for attributing the worship of springs, which we find among both nations, originally to the one rather than to the other. This is a cult which is found among Slavs as well as Teutons and Kelts, and, in fact, among a large number of peoples. It does not furnish a sufficient basis for assuming an historical connection.

The greatest obstacle that we encounter in attempting to trace the nationality of various gods lies in their foreign, that is to say their Latin, names. Several divinities bear on inscriptions the name of Hercules, and the grounds on which they have been called Keltic or Teutonic are not always conclusive. There is, moreover, still a third possibility. The Roman soldiers in the provinces must have brought along their own divinities. It is highly probable that the Hercules Saxanus of a number of inscriptions found in the valley of the Brohl and the vicinity of Metz was not a Teutonic Donar or Saxnot, but the genuine Roman tutelar deity of the miners.[1]

[1] Compare El. H. Meyer, PBB. XVIII. H. Cannegieter, followed by numerous other scholars had already suggested this explanation of the Hercules Saxanus in 1758.

On the whole rather too much has been claimed as the property of the Kelts.

This latter observation does not, however, apply to the *matres*, or *matronae*,[1] that are found represented or inscribed on various monuments of the first centuries of our era, and whose Keltic origin is at present quite generally recognized. These mother goddesses frequently form groups of three; they bestow a blessing upon the fields and make them fruitful, and hence are frequently represented with fruits and flowers, with ears of corn or a horn of plenty. Their cult must have been very widespread, reaching from Britain to Switzerland. The great extent of this territory is no doubt to be accounted for in part by the fact that the cult was spread by Keltic soldiers in the armies. On the right bank of the Rhine the *matronae* are only rarely met with. Their surnames bear to a large extent a local character. That among these latter there are some of Teutonic origin — especially those ending in *ims* — does not alter the fact that the *matronae* themselves are of Keltic origin.

We must assume, therefore, that Teutons and Kelts, living for many centuries in constant and active intercourse, mutually influenced each other, the influence of Kelts on Teutons being undoubtedly stronger than that of Teutons on Kelts. While the contact between Teutons and Slavs was of an altogether less intimate character, it too demands some attention. The ancient accounts all indicate that the Vistula formed the original boundary between Teutons and Slavs. The group that is at times simply called Slavs really comprises two distinct groups: the Balts or Letts (the Æstii of Tacitus) and the Slavs (the Venedi).

[1] The literature and list of names may be found in the article by M. Ihm, in Roscher's *Lexicon*, pp. 264–279. J. de Wal's *De Moedergodinnen* (1846), the first important treatise on this subject, is now antiquated. The classical work is that of M. Ihm, in the *Jahrb. d. Vereins von Alterthumsfreunden im Rheinlande* (1887). Compare further F. Kauffmann, in Weinhold's *Zs. des Vereins für Volksk.*, II (1892), and H. Kern, in *Versl. en Med. K. Akad. Amst.* (1872), who explains a number of *epitheta* from Teutonic words.

Tacitus gives us little information concerning these peoples. That they led a free and rude mode of life was practically all that his informants could tell him. The Æstii he still classes among the Teutons and compares them with the Suebi. That they too worshipped a *mater deum* possesses from our point of view no special significance, inasmuch as the Romans when interpreting unfamiliar divinities took into consideration only a single characteristic, and we are, therefore, in no way compelled to compare this *mater deum* with the *terra mater* (Nerthus) of the Teutonic tribes along the seacoast. Tacitus classes the Venedi with that mass of semi-barbarous peoples whom he dismisses with a few words expressive of horror, although he does not deny the possibility that they too were Teutons. Other Roman accounts furnish little additional information.

When during the period of the migration of nations one Teutonic tribe after another — Vandals, Goths, Gepidæ, Heruli, Lugii, Burgundians — began to push forward to the south and west, the region between the Vistula, Oder, and Elbe must have become depopulated. The Balto-Slavs to the north- and south-east took advantage of this opportunity to extend their domain. With the expedition of the Lombards in the sixth century these migrations came to an end, and in the seventh century the power of the Slavs in Europe reached its extreme limits, extending from the Baltic to the Ægean and the Black Sea, and from the Elbe to the Dnieper and the Alps.

From these facts we may infer that the Balto-Slavs and Teutons were brought into contact on every side, and since with the migration of a people there are always some that stay behind, the two races must undoubtedly have intermingled in the region between the Vistula and the Elbe. The influence thus exerted was, however, not nearly as great as we might be led to expect. The Teutonic tribes always had their faces turned to the west and south and it was the contact with

Kelts and Romans, and not with Balto-Slavs, that moulded them. Besides, what could they borrow from their neighbors on the east, who were their inferiors in civilization? The two peoples had a strong aversion towards one another, which continued uninterruptedly and to which the medieval chronicles when speaking of the Slavs constantly recur.[1] The wars, as a consequence of which the Saxon emperors of the tenth century again drove the Slavs out of the old Teutonic country to the east of the Elbe, were characterized by the greatest fierceness and animosity. Nor did the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity engender more fraternal feelings between them and the Teutons. From the very outset they declared allegiance not to Rome but to Byzantium, and while the schism between the Eastern and Western Church was not yet in existence, the Slavs, nevertheless, through this dependence on Byzantium remained outside the circle of the European body politic of the Middle Ages. Even at the present day, after the lapse of so many centuries, the Wends living in various parts of Saxony are regarded as a class quite distinct from the Germans round about them.

It is, therefore, not to be expected that a comparison with Balto-Slavic observances and conceptions will shed any great light on the religion of the Teutons. Here, again, not much importance should be attached to similarities of a general character. That the Balto-Slavs too regarded forests and springs as sacred, that parallels may be found in the folklore, does not constitute an argument for the existence of active intercourse between the two peoples. Such parallels are encountered everywhere. An inspection of the names of Lithuanian gods[2] will show that the resemblance to Teutonic mythology is but slight.

[1] Adam of Bremen and Thietmar of Merseburg in the eleventh, and Helmold in the twelfth, centuries. Illustrations of the hatred and contempt felt by the Germans for the Wends may be found in Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, III, 1, pp. 86–92.

[2] I have in mind here the list given by H. Usener, *Götternamen* (1896), pp. 85–108.

And yet, despite the aversion existing between the two races, contiguity of habitation and the wars waged between them must have left decided traces in legends and customs. The Scandinavians more especially came into close contact with the Slavs. Vikings founded, in the country of the Wends, the Jomsburg, which plays such an important rôle in the history of the North during the tenth century; and in Gardariki (Russia) a Swedish family established its rule. It is perfectly legitimate, therefore, to endeavor to explain certain characteristic features of the myths and customs of the two peoples on the score of this intercourse. Such attempts have actually been made, although they have met with little success. The prophetess Vǫlva, the divine race of the Vanir, Kvasir, who had sprung from the spittle of Æsir and Vanir, and from whose blood the poets' mead was made, the phallic symbol of Freyr, are some of the elements to which a Slavic origin has been attributed. This, however, is to a large degree conjectural, and in order to support the claim in any one instance a special investigation is called for. The theory of the Slavic origin of the Vanir, more especially, runs counter to all that we know about these gods.

In the case of all such parallels we should hesitate a long time before assuming an historical connection. The following may serve as illustration. An Arab, Ibn Fozlan, travelled in 921 as ambassador of the Caliph of Bagdad to the Wolga and there witnessed the funeral rites of a distinguished Russian. A funeral pyre of wood was erected on a ship, a girl set aside to accompany the body in death, the sacrificial victims, consisting in part of horses, were slaughtered, and finally the whole was set afire. This union of two modes of disposal of the dead, first entrusting the body to the sea in a boat and then burning it, is so characteristically Scandinavian, and it reminds one so strongly of the well-known episode of the burning of Baldr's body, that we seem almost compelled to

assume a connection. And yet such a connection is strenuously denied from both sides, by Slavic as well as by Teutonic mythologists.[1] The agreement is after all of a general character, consisting of isolated correspondences, such as are found among various peoples, and side by side with points of agreement there are also important differences to be noted. One might venture an opinion in favor of the one view as against the other, but certainty cannot be attained.

To sum up, the parallels between Teutons and Balto-Slavs are doubtful in character and unimportant. We may at any rate safely assert that no great Slavic current ran through ancient Teutonic life.

Of far greater significance are the relations of the Northern Teutons with the Finns. Here again the origins lie hidden from our view. It was formerly held that all of Central and Western Europe was at one time occupied by a Finnish population, a wild, primitive race which had been subjugated by the Indo-Europeans. This theory has gone the way of the other fond dreams of Indo-European splendor. Finns and Lapps no doubt set foot in Europe at about the same time as the Indo-Europeans, possibly a little earlier. From very early times they mutually influenced each other. The Finnish language more particularly bears traces of very old borrowings from Teutonic languages, from a period of language development preceding the time of Ulfilas. Evidence of this latter kind is more reliable than that based on manners and customs, although an attempt has also been made to show from ceremonies observed at marriage that there existed prehistoric relations between the Finno-Ugric and Indo-European families.[2]

In Sweden and Norway the Finns preceded the Teutons; it has even been suggested that the name Scandinavia (*i.e.*

[1] G. Krek, *Einleitung in die slavische Litteraturgeschichte* (second edition, 1887); J. Grimm, *Ueber das Verbrennen der Leichen* (*Kl. Schr.*, II).

[2] L. v. Schroeder, *Die Hochzeitsbräuche der Esten* (1888).

Scadinavia) takes its origin from them.[1] Among the Mongolian tribes settled in these regions we distinguish the Lapps (Sabme) and Finns (Suomi). The former, heathen in part even to the present day, led a more savage life and kept aloof from civilized peoples. On the other hand, the very language of the Finns shows how many elements of culture they borrowed from Teutons as well as from Balto-Slavs. They lived on both sides of the Bothnic Gulf, as well as along the eastern shore of the Baltic, along whose southern border they occupied the present provinces of Courland, Livonia, and Esthonia, a semi-depopulated region, which had been abandoned by the Teutons and only sparsely settled by the Balts. Here they assumed, before A.D. 800, the name of Esthonians, a designation that properly belongs to a Baltic tribe.

The testimony of the ancients concerning the Finns is extremely vague: even Procopius[2] does not venture beyond a few astounding statements concerning the savagery of these Thulitae and Scrithinni. With these latter tribes, Tacitus accordingly brings his treatment of the Teutons to a close, not suspecting apparently that these Fenni are the same people as the Sitones, whom he had mentioned some chapters previous as adjoining the Suiones (Swedes) on the north. His statement that they were ruled by a woman has been explained as due to the misunderstanding of a name. The Finns as inhabitants of the lowlands were called Kainulaiset,[3] and this word changed to Kvenir (O. N. *kona*, woman: gen. pl. *kvenna*) gave rise to the fable of female sovereignty.[4]

While the relations between Finns and Northern Teutons doubtless go back to very early times, there are good reasons

[1] This is, however, extremely doubtful. Compare Müllenhoff, DA. II, 359 ff., and Bugge, PBB. XXI, 424.

[2] *Bellum Gothicum*, II, 15. [3] Müllenhoff, DA. II, 10.

[4] Another interpretation, according to which the Kvenir were originally Scandinavians and mingled with the Finns only at a later time, is given by K. B. Wiklund, *Om Kvänerna och deras nationalitet*, AfnF. XII.

for supposing that the period of greatest reciprocal influence is approximately coextensive with the age of the Vikings (800 - 1000). A discussion of these influences may appropriately be introduced at this point.

The songs which Lönnrot, during the second quarter of our century, caught up from the mouths of the people he united with admirable skill into an epic poem, which, while by no means merely a product of the poet's art, has yet in its present form not arisen spontaneously. These features make the *Kalewala*[1] unique in the whole range of the world's literature. Now this epic contains in its diction characteristic features and episodes that are reminiscences of Norse mythology, without, however, resembling the latter. It is of some importance that we should form a correct conception of the nature of this relationship. After many futile attempts made by various scholars Comparetti seems finally to have found the correct solution.

A number of these correspondences lie on the surface. Such are: the great value attached to magic formulas, songs, and signs, which are by both peoples called "runes"; Wäinämöinen, the hero of Kalewa, is like Odhin a great magician; Sampo, around which a large part of the action of the *Kalewala* turns, is like the millstone Grotti, — an object that produces all that one wishes. Are we to suppose that the Finns borrowed all these features from the Scandinavians? The answer must be that we cannot by any possibility assume literary dependence, but that we may to a certain extent posit influence through oral tradition. The Finns were not acquainted with either scaldic poetry or Eddic song, and they certainly did not copy their Wäinämöinen from Odhin. They borrowed a few individual words, so doubtless "rune" and probably

[1] J. Grimm, *Ueber das finnische Epos* (*Kl. Schr.*, II); L. Uhland, *Odin* (*Schr.*, VI); A. Castrén, *Vorlesungen über die finnische Mythologie* (German translation by A. Schiefner, 1853), pp. 298–303; J. Krohn, *Kalevala-Studien* (in Veckenstedt's ZfV. 1889); D. Comparetti, *Der Kalewala* (German, 1892).

also "Sampo" (= *commonwealth*, according to Comparetti). Their epic tales bear, however, as a rule a truly national character; what they borrowed from the Scandinavians they have thoroughly assimilated. The Finnish epic rests wholly on the basis of Shamanism; there is not a single myth or character which has been borrowed woof and warp from Scandinavia. Its magicians are not gods, as are those of the Teutons; manners, customs, conceptions, — all are different. And yet it cannot be denied that intercourse with the Teutons has exerted an influence on the Finns. Through this influence their magic practices have been more or less modified; the magic drum pushed into the background, and the runic lore into the foreground. Similarly, magic incantation, indigenous among the Teutons, has also become of chief importance among the Finns; we even find in use among them, as in the Merseburg formulas, the magic word that serves to cure the halting horse. Numerous other parallels might be cited, which all go to show that, while each of the two peoples borrowed to a considerable extent from the other, each preserved its national character intact.

Not that the Teutons were obliged to learn magic from the Finns; but throughout Old Norse literature, as well as in Saxo, Olaus Magnus, and other authors, the Finns are held in high repute as magicians, and a distinction was at times drawn between the arts of Lapps and of Finns. Mention is also made in the same sources of the state of ecstasy in which Finnish magicians exercised their power or brought to light hidden things, as well as of magic knots that brought about favorable winds or storm. The sagas furnish numerous examples of Finnish magicians. Harald Fairhair married the daughter of a Finnish magician, Snæfrid, and preserved her body for three years after her death, without decomposition setting in; and when finally the linen robe was removed snakes and insects issued forth from it. Gunnhild also, the

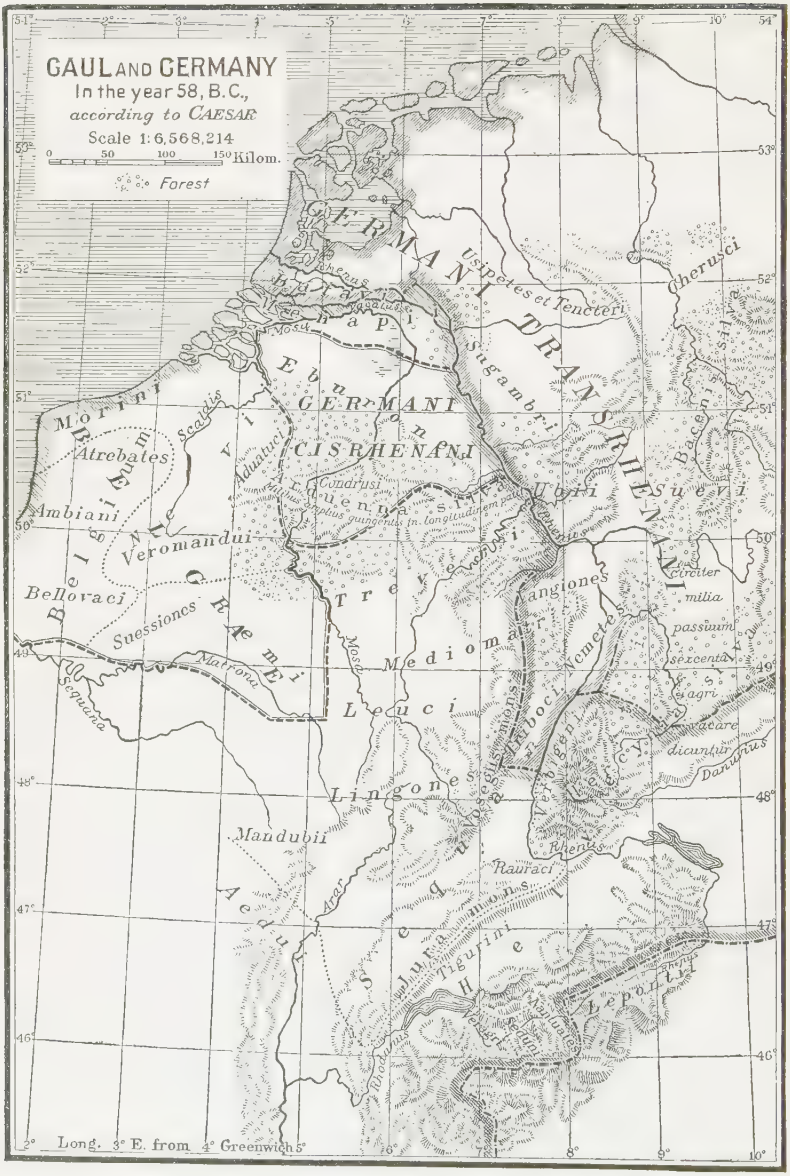
wife of Eric Bloody-axe, son of Harald Fairhair, made frequent use of Finnish magic arts, mostly for purposes of evil. In Norse law, going to Finmark for the sake of learning magic is forbidden under pain of severe penalties. As early as the time of Olaf Tryggvason we hear of the consequences of such a prohibition, and not only in the historic but in the romantic sagas as well Finnish magic is continually referred to.[1]

Among the divinities of the Norse pantheon there are two or three that bear an unmistakably Finnish character. First among these is Skadhi, the daughter of the giant Thjazi, who became the wife of Njǫrdhr. She is entirely Finnish ; she walks on snowshoes (*ski*) and hunts game with bow and arrow. Likewise Finnish is Thorgerdh Hǫlgabrudh, with her sister Irpa, who was worshipped especially by jarl Hakon and who had a number of temples in which her images had been installed, of life size and with golden rings on the fingers. In the battle with the Jomsvikings this Thorgerdh aided jarl Hakon, but not until he had sacrificed to her his seven-year-old son. She then brought about terrific thunder- and hail-storms, in which the Jomsvikings perished with their entire fleet.[2]

Norsemen therefore, while at times standing in awe of Finnish witchcraft, as a rule reposed great confidence in it, and it is in this field more particularly that the two peoples kept up constant relations with each other.

[1] Of the rich literature on this subject it will suffice to mention the following: Fritzner, *Lappernes Hedenskab og Trolldomskunst* (*Norsk Hist. Tidskr.*, IV); E. Beauvois, *La magie chez les Finnois* (*Rev. Hist. d. Rel.*, 1881); K. Maurer, *Bekehrung des norwegischen Stammes*, II, 417 ff.; L. Uhland, *Thor* (*Schr.*, VI, 398 ff.).

[2] *Færeyingasaga*, Chapter 23; *Njálasaga*, Chapter 87; *Jómsvíkingasaga*, Chapter 44; Biarni's *Jomsvikingadrápa*, CPB. II, 301. Interpretations of this saga as of others vary widely. Compare G. Storm, AfnF. II; A. Olrik, *Kilderne til Sakses Oldh.*; Detter, ZfdA. XXXII; S. Bugge, *Helgedigtene*, pp. 321 ff. Bugge holds that the conception of Thorgerdh as a Finnish woman is secondary. From Norse legends he contends this saga-heroine developed in Ireland into a goddess of battle, her power of magic making her subsequently pass as a Finn.



From O. Bremer, "Ethnographie der germanischen Stämme," in *Paul's Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*, by courtesy of Karl J. Trübner

CHAPTER V

TEUTONS AND ROMANS

"Not for a long time to come will the interpretation of these passages be definitely established." Thus wrote J. Grimm in 1844 of the "priceless records"[1] of the Romans, and after more than fifty years the observation still holds good. These Roman accounts are numerous, but they are fragmentary and frequently obscure. Tacitus, our main source, is lauded by one scholar as endowed with "a quick apprehension of ideas otherwise foreign to classical authors,"[2] while another authority speaks of "an iridescent method of delineation, an horizon limited to the conventional range of thought of declining antiquity and a too frequent neglect of the really essential factors."[3] We must here consider the more important passages that have a bearing on the religion.

Cæsar came into contact with the Teutons only casually, and no great weight is therefore to be attached to his observations concerning them. In part, these agree with what we know from other sources, so, for example, that the Teutons had no priestly caste corresponding to the Gallic Druids, and that before battle the women practised soothsaying. But his other statements, that they made no sacrifices and knew no other gods than visible natural phenomena, such as Sol, Vulcan, and Luna, are sufficiently refuted by the testimony of Tacitus. We do not even know from what source Cæsar arrived at just these three divinities; perhaps he overheard a Teuton invoking

[1] J. Grimm, DM., Vorrede, p. x.
[2] L. von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, III, 38.
[3] Th. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, V, 154.

the sun and other celestial bodies, just as Bojocalus, the leader of the Ansivari, did in solemn fashion when the Romans would not grant to his people the waste tracts which they demanded.[1] More accurate than the notes of Cæsar seems the account of Strabo concerning the priestesses of the Cimbri, who cut the throats of the prisoners of war above a sacrificial vessel and then prophesied from the blood that flowed into it.

Tacitus is beyond all comparison our richest source, and it is through him that the full light of history is first shed on the Teutons. His knowledge of Germany is extensive, and of his love of truth there is no reasonable doubt. It remains necessary, however, to weigh his testimony and to inquire first of all from what sources he drew his information. These latter were doubtless numerous and reliable; for more than a century the Teutons had been within the Roman horizon, and Pliny's extensive work on wars with the Teutons was at the disposal of Tacitus. At Rome he had the opportunity of seeing and questioning many Teutonic soldiers and prisoners of war. He had himself probably served as an officer in Germany, just as his father-in-law, Agricola, had been governor in Britain. In the circles in which Tacitus moved, there were doubtless many persons who had in a similar manner become well acquainted with the provinces, and yet even this knowledge had its limits. It was reliable for those regions that the Roman legions had actually traversed, less complete for those lands that were merely to a greater or less degree within the sphere of Roman influence. Accordingly, Tacitus is well informed concerning the West Teutons along the Rhine, but less so concerning the interior of Germany. Whatever incidental information he gives us concerning the distant Baltic coasts he has only at second hand. He is himself careful to pay due regard to this difference in the character of his material; he explicitly warns us

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, XIII, 55. The story may also be found in Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen*, Nr. 367.

when what he relates is founded on mere rumor, and he not infrequently leaves a question undecided. At times we see even more clearly than could Tacitus that the material at his disposal was inadequate to determine the question at issue, so, for example, as to the autochthonous character of the Teutonic people.

The style of his historical writings is rhetorical and, on account of unnatural twists and turns of phrase, frequently obscure. Thus in the very first sentence of the *Germania* correctness of statement is sacrificed to style. The author is on the hunt for telling antitheses and style-effects. Moreover, his outlook and judgment are those of a Roman of his time, as may be seen from the comparison he makes between the Romans enervated through luxury, and the unspoiled people of nature, — a comparison that had long since become one of the stock-ideas of literature.[1] While these factors have doubtless colored the picture Tacitus draws of the Teutons, we may yet easily overestimate their importance. The *Germania* of Tacitus is not an idyl, nor a romance, nor a political pamphlet; it contains a wealth of material, gives evidence of not a small degree of objectivity, and is, in truth, a scientific document of high historical value. It is manifestly unjust to the historian of A.D. 100 to reproach him with the fact that in the year 1900 questions are asked to which he furnishes no answer.

The Teutonic tribes which Tacitus knew were not savages. While lacking the institutions found among peoples of more advanced culture, they yet did not live in anarchy. They found a livelihood in the chase and from their flocks; agriculture, too, was not unknown to them. The several tribes possessed territory of their own and had fixed abodes, but various causes frequently induced or compelled them to change these. Again, individual tribes might fuse with others or disappear from the scene altogether. Fixed institutions that furnished a guarantee

[1] Compare Horace, *Odes*, III, xxiv, 9; Seneca, *De Ira*, I, 9.

of stability were lacking. Scholars have, therefore, undoubtedly gone too far in recognizing in the picture as drawn by Tacitus various political and judicial institutions that afterwards existed among the Teutons; but it is equally unjust to represent them as a band of savages among whom club-law reigned supreme, and who had to learn the very elements of law from the Romans.[1] Established custom, a feeling of honor, and divination, all served to maintain certain fixed forms that checked the free course of personal caprice and passion.

Besides, we must not lose sight of the fact that to the Teuton the past was ever living and present in songs celebrating the divine origin of the tribes and the achievements of their heroes, such as Arminius. From the earliest times the tribes loved their songs. In them they handed down their legends, and even at a later period a harp was one of the three things which a king of the Vandals, at the fall of his kingdom in Africa, desired in his direst need. At their very entrance on the stage of history the Teutons possessed songs. In them are celebrated the traditions of the tribe and the fame of the hero and leader. We meet with families of leaders at the very outset, and there are even beginnings of kingship, such as that of Arminius among the Cherusci and Maroboduus among the Marcomanni. Too much has been made of the search for fixed characteristics that distinguished families of royal or noble blood from the general class of freemen. It is certain, however, that the Teutons of old held in honor *nobilitas* alongside of *virtus* and, at a later period as well, attached great importance to descent from noble ancestors.[2]

The Teutonic tribes at the beginning of the Christian era did not constitute a national unit. They constantly waged

[1] So Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*, I, pp. 200, 206, 213.

[2] For examples among the Heruli, at a later time, see Procopius, *Bellum Gothicum*, II, 15; compare also K. Maurer, *Ueber das Wesen des ältesten Adels der deutschen Stämme* (1846).

war upon one another ; so in Cæsar's time the Ubii upon the Suebi, and subsequently the Cherusci under Arminius upon the Marcomanni under Maroboduus. Similarly, Tacitus tells us of a war between the Chatti and Hermunduri. Nor did they present a united front as over against foreigners, and in consequence we experience considerable difficulty in the attempt to distinguish between Teutonic and Keltic tribes on the left bank of the Rhine. Against Rome, too, the Teutons did not make common cause ; some eagerly sought alliance, and even entered into the military service of Rome. We frequently find love of freedom and thirst for vengeance against injustice and oppression inciting Teutons to war against Rome, but neither the war under Arminius, nor that under Maroboduus, nor that under Civilis bore a general and national character. Religious consecration by means of divination doubtless played a part in these wars, but they cannot be traced to religious motives.

What Tacitus relates of the religion of the Teutons must be interpreted in the light of the meaning that Roman readers attached to his words, and is to be taken with such limitations as are indicated by his own testimony. The necessity of this latter restriction is shown by some contradictions occurring in his works. Whereas the *Germania*, for example, expressly denies the existence of temples as opposed to sacred groves, notwithstanding the fact that a temple of Nerthus is referred to in Chapter 40, the *Annals*[1] and *Histories* mention, in addition to the sacred groves, a temple of Tamfana, which was razed to the ground by Germanicus.

The sacred groves constituted the centre of the religious and political life. There the tribes assembled to plan common undertakings, and there the trophies captured from the enemy were hung up, and prisoners of war slaughtered. We know of several of these sacred groves : the grove of Baduhenna,

[1] *Annals*, I, 51.

where nine hundred Romans fell; the grove of the Nahanarvali, where a priest in woman's clothing worshipped, without images, two brothers by the name of Alcis; the dread grove where the Semnones sacrificed human victims to the *regnator omnium deus*,[1] and which no one was allowed to enter unfettered; the sacred grove (*castum nemus*), on that island in the ocean where seven tribes in holy peace awaited the coming of Nerthus; and, lastly, the grove that is expressly mentioned in connection with the sacred saline streams for which the Chatti and Hermunduri waged war.

Two characteristic features receive especial emphasis in the account that Tacitus gives of Teutonic religion: the air of mystery and the intimate connection with the life of the tribe. Reverence for the mysterious silence of the forest, for the divine in woman and for her powers of divination, — reverence that finds its expression in the bloody rites of the Semnones as well as in the requirement that the slaves who had assisted in the cleansing of the wagon of Nerthus should forthwith be drowned, — this fundamental trait of Teutonic religion impressed Tacitus all the more since this *arcanus terror* was foreign to the Romans. This reverence is in the present instance a characteristic of popular religion; there existed no priestly ritual or kingly authority that could have instilled it; for while priests are repeatedly mentioned by Tacitus as executing sacred rites, as consulting the signs in augury, and as presiding at assemblies of the people, they are nowhere regarded as a caste or separate class with exclusive powers and prerogatives. The individual state, the *civitas*, has its priest (*sacerdos*), just as the whole religious life is intimately connected with that of the tribe. Tacitus indeed speaks only of tribal religions, be it of the single tribe or of a league of tribes, such as among the Greeks was called an *amphiktuonia*. The latter was the case with the seven Nerthus tribes and with

[1] "God, the ruler of all."

the Semnones, in whose midst representatives of a number of tribes, related by blood kinship, assembled for the service of the supreme god. After the strife between the Chatti and Hermunduri mentioned above, it would seem, though the passage is not altogether clear, that the victorious Hermunduri brought to Mars and Mercury the bloody sacrifice of all the prisoners of war. On all public occasions, and notably when about to engage in war, divination was resorted to, from staves inscribed with runes, from birds, or from the neighing of horses. In the popular assemblies at full and new moon, the functions performed by the priests were, next to the influence and authority of the leaders, almost the only element that brought some degree of regularity to the frequently unorderly deliberations. We should be guilty of gross exaggeration if we were to represent the life of the ancient Teutons as wholly permeated with religious ideas and observances, but at the same time various facts cannot be overlooked: that the tribes traced their origin to their gods; that on all occasions they sought in various ways to ascertain the will of these gods; that they went to war — their chief occupation — accompanied by the sacred images and symbols; and that after victory had been won, they offered up their booty to these same gods.

What Tacitus has to say about the Teutonic gods is the least satisfactory part of his treatment. The reason for this lies partly in that he defines their character to so limited an extent and partly in that he calls them, with few exceptions, by Roman names. Through the veil of this Roman interpretation we must perforce seek to catch a glimpse of Teutonic deities. The supreme divinity with Tacitus is Mercury-Wodan. That the Roman Tacitus should call the Teutonic supreme deity Mercury is no doubt to be accounted for in part by the Gallic Mercury. Next to Mercury stood Hercules, whom the warriors in their songs praised as the first of the brave, and Mars, who has been identified with the *regnator omnium* of the

Semnones. Isis, who occurs among a division of the Suebi, Tacitus considered a foreign deity on account of the ship symbol which was connected with her worship. Ship processions are, however, indigenous among the Teutons, and we must therefore regard this Isis as a Teutonic divinity, who is perhaps to be identified with Frija, as Müllenhoff has done. The interpretation of the name Alcis, borne by the two brothers in the sanctuary of the Nahanarvali, offers great difficulties, although both the Asdingi,[1] the long-haired kings of the Vandals, and the Dioscuri (the Hartungen) of the heroic saga present points of resemblance. Genuinely Teutonic names are unfortunately few in number. They include only Nerthus among the Teutonic tribes along the sea and Tamfana among the Marsi. The former, Tacitus explains as signifying *terra mater* (mother earth), an interpretation which has without sufficient reason been called into question.[2]

Besides the Roman historical accounts we learn a few particulars regarding Teutonic divinities and their cult through monuments and inscriptions on coins. But, as has already been pointed out, these inscriptions originate with the Roman legions, and the Teutonic element hence plays a rôle altogether subordinate to the Roman and Keltic. By far the larger part of the Jupiters, Mercurys, Apollos, and Minervas that are found on inscriptions from the west of the Rhine — many of them with surnames that are in part local — were doubtless Keltic and Roman divinities. Nor is there any occasion for surprise that Roman soldiers in a country where the Keltic population was the original and dominant element did not worship many Teutonic gods. There are, however, traces of Teutonic cults in a few names, Latin as well as native. Among these is the Hercules Deusoniensis, whom we find depicted on

[1] Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, Chapter 22.

[2] By Mannhardt, *Baumkultus der Germanen*, pp. 567–602, who sees in Nerthus a male vegetation demon.

coins, with attributes, to be sure, that are certainly not Teutonic, but whose cognomen seems to have been preserved in names of places, such as Duisburg. A richer material is at our disposal in the case of Hercules Magusanus, found on a number of inscriptions from the Netherlands, who is at times joined with other deities of the Lower Rhine region, more especially with Nehalennia. He has been regarded as the chief god of the Batavi and is most likely to be identified with Donar.

A limited number of native names have also been gathered from inscriptions. A stone was unearthed at Breda, consecrated to a goddess Sandraudiga by the *cultores templi*[1]; several inscriptions mention a goddess Hludana, worshipped by fishermen (*conductores piscatus*). This name has certainly no connection with Holda, and probably also none with the Norse Hlodhyn. Various conjectures have been made concerning the god Requalivahanus, whose name occurs on an inscription from the vicinity of Cologne. The name indicates darkness, and by some this darkness has been referred to that of the lower world, by others to that of the forest. The best known figure of all is that of Nehalennia, of whom a large number of monuments were brought to light near Domburg (on the island of Walcheren, the Netherlands) in 1647, and near Deutz (in Rhenish Prussia) in 1776. She is depicted with the attributes of a horn of plenty, a basket of fruit, and a dog. The goddess herself is represented in a standing or sitting posture, rarely with bared head, and frequently in the company of other gods, such as Hercules and Neptune. Many possible and impossible conjectures have been made concerning her origin, her name, her connection or identification with other goddesses. That she was at any rate a Teutonic goddess may now be considered established, and her attributes show conclusively that prosperity and fertility were expected from her.

1 "Priests of the temple."

Teutonic soldiers serving under the Romans in other provinces of the Empire may also have worshipped their ancestral gods beyond the borders of their own native land. That such was actually the case is shown by two inscriptions of the third century, found in 1883 at Housesteads in the north of England, near the Wall of Hadrian. The altar on which they are found was erected by Frisian soldiers from Twenthe, — which is rather strange inasmuch as Twenthe belonged to the territory of the Salic Franks, — and is dedicated "Deo Marti Thingso et duabus Alaesiagis Bede et Fimmilene."[1] The relief above the altar shows an armed warrior with helmet, spear, and shield, at whose right a swan or goose is seen. Both of the receding sides (the relief is semicircular in form) show the same figure of a hovering female, with a sword (or staff) in the one hand and a wreath in the other. The value of these monuments is doubtless great, and yet it has by some been overestimated. What we do know is that the Frisian *cuneus*, encamped in Britain under Alexander Severus, worshipped Mars, *i.e.* Tiu, doubtless as god of war, as the armed figure in itself indicates. A fragment of nature-mythology, according to some scholars, lies concealed in the swan, to be interpreted as the symbol of either light or cloud, and to be brought into connection with the Swan-knights of legendary lore. Similar theories have been advanced regarding the female figures, but all of this is mere conjecture, possessing a greater or less degree of probability. It appears likely that the Frisian cavalrymen, who call themselves citizens, saw in Tiu the god not only of their squadron but also of their popular assembly, the *thing*, and that the two side figures are to be regarded in the same light, their names having been explained from certain forms of Frisian legal procedure. However that may be, the fact that these Frisian soldiers worshipped Tiu does not seem to show conclusively that this god of the sky was originally the

[1] "To the god Mars Thingsus, and the two Alæsiagæ, Bede and Fimmilene."

chief god of all Teutons. There is no warrant, therefore, for regarding this hillock at Housesteads as a "high watch-tower" (*hohe Warte*), from which "we get a broad and far-reaching outlook over the entire Teutonic world."[1] We have no right to make these "citizens of Twenthe" of the Frisian *cuneus* the spokesmen of the whole Teutonic race.

The struggle between Teutons and Romans continued, in one form or another, for more than five centuries. Ever since the time that Tiberius had abandoned his plan of conquering the country up to the Elbe, the Roman legions stood guard at the frontiers of the Empire, chiefly along the line of the Rhine and Danube. The outposts and the expeditions on the other sides of these rivers served merely to strengthen the frontier of the Empire. Among the many Augusti and Caesares who fought against the various Teutonic tribes are: Trajanus, Marcus Aurelius, Probus, Julianus, Valentinianus, Gratianus. The West Teutons in both of the Roman provinces that went by the name of Germania lived as subjects of the Empire. The tribes that issued forth from the interior were regularly, with only few exceptions, vanquished by the Roman armies. The migrations, which it is customary to regard as having begun with the crossing of the Danube in 378, are merely the continuation, on the one hand, of the war waged for centuries past at the *limes* of the Empire and, on the other, of those numerous *trecks* that, from causes unknown to us, repeatedly drove first Kelts and then Teutons from the interior to the frontiers of the Empire. What the Goths did in 378 was exactly what Brennus, what the Cimbri and Teutones had before done, what the Goths themselves had done as early as A.D. 250.

We are not here concerned with furnishing an historic survey, but with setting forth clearly the nature of the influence exerted by Romans on Teutons. This influence was confined to those who appeared at the frontiers of the Empire or who

[1] Hoffory, *Eddastudien*, p. 173.

settled within its borders. Romans did not to any extent visit the Teutons of the interior. The protracted contest at the *limes* did not cause a chasm between the two peoples, nor did it create among the Teutons a feeling of national unity. Many Teutons served as faithful allies in Roman armies, and the posts of honor of the Empire, conferring distinction and authority, were open to Teutons no less than to Spaniards and Syrians. In the great battle of nations between Romans and Huns at Châlons-sur-Marne (451) there served under Aëtius, West Goths and Burgundians, under Attila, East Goths, Gepidæ, and Heruli; that is to say, there were Teutons on both sides. In the fifth century the all-powerful ministers of the Roman Empire were largely Teutons; so the Vandal Stilicho, the Suabian Ricimer. We must therefore not fall into the error of representing the battle waged for centuries between Rome and the Teutons as one that took place between two peoples. The Roman Empire, which was assimilating Teutonic elements in an ever-increasing ratio, warded off at the *limes* the attacks of the more or less unorganized bands that issued from the interior: Marcomanni, Alemanni, etc. These were almost invariably defeated. The saying of Tacitus, "tam diu Germania vincitur,"[1] may in fact serve as a motto for the entire period. But although defeated a countless number of times, these bands were ever able to fill their depleted ranks, belonging as they did to a nation that did not restrict the number of its children, and which was, therefore, ever rich in men capable of bearing arms and with no occupation except to join in expeditions of plunder and pillage. As to the immediate causes of these expeditions and the collisions in the course of centuries between individual Teutonic tribes in the interior, we are absolutely uninformed. Nor can we account for the establishment of that kingdom of the Goths in Southern Russia, which is perpetuated in the heroic saga. Their migration southward

[1] "So long have we been endeavoring to conquer Germany."

brought them into collision with the Eastern Roman Empire and formed the beginning of the so-called migration of nations, which consisted, however, rather of plundering expeditions of armies than of changes of habitation of the several tribes from one locality to another. Various tribes might join in such an expedition; the result was in some cases the disappearance of the entire band, — as, for example, when Stilicho annihilated the formidable army of Radagais, — in others, the establishment of a kingdom.

The Roman power did not therefore succumb to the superior force of a morally uncorrupted and materially unweakened people. The Empire crumbled and fell to pieces of itself, and the Teutonic barbarians entered upon the inheritance. Repeating what so many of their predecessors had done, who had previously allowed themselves to be incorporated into the unity of the Empire, these Teutons appropriated Roman institutions to the greatest possible extent, and became, in fact, Romanized. Such was the case with the West-Teutonic tribes, who had for so long a period occupied the Roman provinces of Germania Superior and Inferior, and subsequently with the East Teutons, who played the chief rôle in the migration of nations. As rapidly as they pass from the condition of predatory bands to a more settled state, they assume the forms of the Roman Empire, some, to be sure, to a greater degree than others; the West Goths in Gaul and Spain, and the East Goths in Italy, more so than the Vandals in Africa.

What we learn of the religion of these tribes during this period consists solely of isolated facts, incidentally mentioned by writers who took no real interest in the paganism of these barbarians. These facts may prove to be of some value for the purpose of comparison with the data of other periods, but they do not suffice to furnish us with an accurate historical outline. We are told of sacrifices, frequently human, and of divination; we read of Christianized Franks [1] who drowned

[1] Procopius, *Bellum Gothicum*, II, 25.

the captive women and children of Goths as a sacrifice offering in the river. The historian adds the comment that these barbarians, although Christianized, had retained numerous heathen customs, such as human offerings and other abominable sacrifices, for the purpose of divination, — an observation doubtless of wide, if not general, application for that period.

For all that, the period of migration yields a valuable harvest for the study of Teutonic religion, inasmuch as in it lie the origins of the heroic saga. The voice of song was evidently, in these rude times, not wanting among the Teutons. Their chiefs were not held as ordinary men, but as a race of demigods, for whom we also meet the name Anses,[1] indicating their descent from the gods. This was doubtless true for other peoples besides the Goths. In the narrative of the monk Paulus Diaconus, who in the eighth century wrote a history of his own people, the Lombards, we now and then catch a glimpse of songs in which the Lombards kept the memory of their past alive. The Teutonic heroic saga, therefore, although developed only at a later time, and combined with various elements of other origin, yet has its roots in the period of migrations. This subject, will, however, demand a separate treatment later on.

About the year 500, the final result of the migrations seemed to have been reached, and the condition of Western Europe to have been permanently fixed. In England the Anglo-Saxons ruled; in Gaul Chlodowech had established the powerful kingdom of the Franks; the West Goths had occupied Spain, and the Vandals the old Roman province of Africa; in Italy the great kingdom of the East Goths was established, which also embraced parts of Pannonia and Dacia. Theodoric possessed a certain degree of leadership and ascendancy over the other Teutonic kings, those of the Vandals, West Goths, and Thuringians being allied to him through marriage. He also

[1] Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, Chapter 13.

endeavored, with varying success, to incorporate the Franks into that "system of states" (*Staatensystem*), as Ranke calls it, in which he occupied the position of a Teutonic king as well as of ruler of the Roman Empire of the West.

This first attempt to found permanent kingdoms was frustrated through the powerful intervention of the emperor Justinian, who in the sixth century annihilated the Vandal and East-Gothic states. While Byzantium could not maintain its sway in the conquered lands, and long-suffering Italy fell into the hands of the Lombards, who held it until the end of the eighth century, yet the map of the world had been totally changed, and the Franks had become the paramount power. Now these Franks settled in lands that more than any other province had been the seat of Roman culture. Gaul had been entirely Romanized, and they entered upon the inheritance of this ancient culture. In seeking the origin of the French nation three elements are thus to be taken into account: the Keltic, Roman, and Teutonic. Of these the Roman, while of least consequence as regards blood, is yet in other respects the most important, — another proof of the fact that an historic result does not exclusively, nor even mainly, depend upon physical descent.

From what has been said, it is evident that there is a link connecting the ancient world with the medieval. The Roman Empire was not overthrown by the Teutons, who put in its place their own institutions and customs. Doubtless the Teutons also made their contributions, but less in the way of legal forms and usages, although such were not altogether wanting, than by the way in which they modified Roman institutions according to their own needs. To show this does not, however, fall within the province of the history of religion, but within that of the history of law and politics. What has been said will suffice to indicate the general historical setting of the centuries under consideration.

It is in this period, too, that most of the Teutonic peoples accepted Christianity. With their very entrance upon the stage of history they become Christians; their paganism belongs largely to their prehistoric period. All of the Teutonic kingdoms already mentioned were Christian, mostly Arian, the Franks alone being orthodox. The Teutonic nations received their civilization through Roman law and culture, and through Christianity. We are now prepared to take up the traces of paganism that come to the surface upon the conversion of the Teutons to Christianity.

The Teutons appear upon the scene of history in three stages. First of all, the West-Teutonic tribes come into contact with the Romans since the time of Cæsar; these become disintegrated and disappear. Next, during the period of migrations, the East Teutons found their powerful kingdoms; West and East Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, and last of all the Lombards, who do not, however, form a part of the East-Teutonic group. These are all overthrown in turn and vanish from the scene. Only a third group, of which the Franks were the leaders and champions, and which embraces the peoples of Middle Germany, has permanently represented the Teutonic element in the world's history. The Scandinavian peoples have a history of their own, to which we shall have to devote separate chapters.

CHAPTER VI

PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

"The heathen Teutons, almost without exception, allow the Christian propagandism to proceed undisturbed." "We hear little of heathen fanaticism or of true Christian heroism."[1] In so far as it is possible to generalize concerning the intricate and involved conditions of the centuries of conversion, the words above quoted are true. In the case of the first Teutonic peoples, at least, that went over to Christianity, heathenism did not offer any strenuous resistance. But even on this point our information is again very meagre, since the Latin or Greek historians of this period rarely, and then only incidentally, allow a ray of light to fall on the history of the Christianization. Concerning the peoples whose conversion took place later we are somewhat better informed, but in no case do the scanty accounts furnish us an historic picture of heathendom, as it held its ground for the time being or gave up the struggle against advancing Christianity. We shall have to content ourselves with gathering scattered items of information concerning the various peoples.

It is not possible to trace the first Christian influences on the Teutons. Poetic fancy has at times pictured the soldiers on Golgotha, and even the centurion who first confessed the Crucified One, as Teutons. At any rate, during the centuries of friction and intermingling between Romans and Teutons, the latter were not cut off from anything that was going on in the Roman world. Consequently, Christianity too must of

[1] F. Dahn, *Urgeschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker*, I, pp. 425, 428.

itself have made its way to Teutonic soldiers and colonists. A recent historian[1] compares this spread of Christianity with what takes place when by accident seed is scattered unevenly over a piece of ground. The wind carries the seeds in all directions, and many are lost, but if this state of affairs continues for some length of time, not only will single seeds germinate here and there, but presently large stretches of the field will show a luxuriant growth.

This view furnishes an explanation of the fact that there are tribes who went over to Christianity without special preaching and without outward coercion. Of the great influence which a Christian was able to exert through his holy life upon the rude minds of barbarians, the biography of Severinus offers a striking example. This more or less mysterious man, of unknown origin, lived about 450 in Noricum, on the great highway followed by the Teutons in their expeditions to Italy. His biography furnishes us with a picture of the confusion that reigned in a Roman province at a time when the death of Attila subverted all existing conditions. With the collapse of the power of the Huns, the remnant of Roman population in Noricum was no longer able to maintain itself against the inroads of the plundering barbarians. During that period of suffering this saintly man pursues his mission of peace amidst the surging tide of humanity, ministering to the sick and poor, and pleading for mercy with princes. His person inspires respect; with superstitious awe people relate the miracles he has done and come to consult him as an oracle. Teutonic kings even accept his reproofs. To Odoacer the youth, whose tall figure had to stoop upon entering the hermit's hut, he foretold future greatness. Severinus did not convert a people to Christianity. After his death his cell was plundered by the savage Rugii; but in the wildest surroundings his voice often gave comfort and at times quelled the storms of passion.

[1] Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands.*

One of the channels through which Christianity gradually made its way to the Teutons may have been prisoners of war, who preached the gospel among their heathen conquerors. According to a fairly well established tradition, Ulfilas, though born and bred among the Goths, was of Cappadocian origin. At any rate, when the Goths first settled within the confines of the Eastern Roman Empire and became converted to Christianity, the way for this change of belief among them had already been paved. The conversion did not altogether take place without friction, although it is hardly likely that it was solely attachment to paganism that impelled the Gothic king Athanaric, about the year 350, to persecute the Christians, whereas king Fritigern readily accepted Christianity. Perhaps Athanaric and a few other Teutonic kings who put Christians to death, such as Radagais on his expedition to Italy in the beginning of the fifth century, combated in the new religion the Roman Empire as well. On the other hand, there have been also Gothic martyrs, and Ulfilas himself was forced to seek the protection of the emperor within the boundaries of the realm. With this Ulfilas, German literature, properly speaking, begins; its first work is a translation of the Bible. German paganism has hardly left us any writings of its own.

The special form of Christianity to which the Goths and most Teutonic tribes became converted was Arianism. The first of these came into actual contact with it, and the others followed the example once set. It was not a question, therefore, of choice or predilection, nor is it admissible to speak of a closer affinity between heathenism and the Arian dogma, which made the step an easier one for the heathen to take. It is not obvious just what these connecting links would be in the case of the Teutons, nor is it credible that the warrior bands and their chiefs really weighed the matter seriously. We shall see later on that the Franks, and at first the Burgundians as well, were converted to the Catholic church with no less ease than the

Goths and others to Arianism. External circumstances drew the Gothic peoples into this current which exerted so great an influence upon their subsequent history. The attitude of the several Arian peoples toward the Catholics varied widely. Whereas the East and West Goths, in their kingdoms in Italy, Gaul, and Spain, and especially Theodoric in Italy, lived on the whole at peace with the Roman clergy, the Vandals in Africa conducted themselves as conquerors, and the Catholics under their dominion had to endure severe persecutions. The details of this movement belong to the history of the Christian church. For our present purpose it will suffice to emphasize the easy and rapid passing over from the old belief to the new.

An especially good example of this is furnished by the Burgundians, to whom the emperor Honorius in 413 ceded territory within the confines of the Empire, and who were baptized by a Gallic bishop after having been instructed for a period of only one week. They were followed in 430 by their kinsmen on the right bank of the Rhine. These Burgundians were the first Teutons to be admitted to the Roman federation, which, however, did not prevent their downfall. They were almost wholly annihilated by Aëtius and the Huns; a remnant fled to the Rhone, where we meet them again in the time of Chlodowech, but, under the influence of the West Goths, as Arians.

The reasons why the paganism of these Teutonic peoples showed so little power of resistance are not to be sought in a decay of their religion, which though frequently assumed has never been proved, but in their outward circumstances and relations. We have already seen that they bore the character of bands of warriors — *catervae*, as the Roman historians occasionally style them — rather than of peoples. They were quite willing to purchase the privilege of settling within the Empire, and obtaining desirable lands, with a conversion to which they attached to a large extent outward significance only, and which

did not demand any great sacrifices on their part. Furthermore, Roman civilization, of which Christianity constituted a part, exerted a powerful attraction upon them. They accordingly became *foederati* of the Empire and Christians. There were many reasons why they should not have felt strongly attached to the ancestral belief. They had abandoned their hereditary lands and with that forsaken a large part of their traditions. Undoubtedly, the heathen armies had soothsayers and priests in their midst, for we read of sacrifices to rivers and to divine beings, but there existed neither a strong organization nor a living faith to prevent the intrusion of a new religion. In the hereditary lands lay the sacred places, groves, and springs, consecrated of old to the gods, and revered as the seats of their worship. When these had once been left behind, the tribes had also to a large extent broken with their religion and their past. That this is not a mere assumption is shown by the fact that where the tribes remained in their old habitations there too the heathen beliefs made a far more determined resistance. This may be more especially observed in the case of the Frisians and Saxons.

Different causes must be sought to account for the fact that the tribes which, under the name of Franks, emerged from the interior about the middle of the third century, and penetrated victoriously into Gaul, remained heathen in spite of constant contact with a Roman population and the existence near at hand of Christian churches on the Rhine. That they did not at once forsake their heathen gods, was no doubt due to the fact that both outward pressure and inner need were lacking, perhaps also in large part to a feeling of pride. We find, however, absolutely no traces among them of a deep-rooted heathen belief or cult. The Salic law, which in its main features dates from heathen times, contains scarcely any traces of religion. There is no warrant for interpreting as myths the legends found in Gregory of Tours, such, for example, as he

tells in II, 12, and which are probably based upon old songs concerning Childeric.

After Chlodowech, in consequence of his victories over the last Roman governor, Syagrius, over the Alemanni and the West Goths, had subjugated nearly the whole of Gaul, the political situation necessarily superinduced the conversion to Christianity. Not that the personal motives which also prompted the king, as well as the influence of his Burgundian wife, and the impression made on him by the miraculous power of the Christian God are not to be considered significant. The conversion of Chlodowech is in no wise to be regarded as hypocritical, any more than that of Constantine. His baptism in the church at Rheims on Christmas day of the year 496 is a date of the utmost importance, the more so since he embraced not the Arian but the Catholic creed. One might justly call it the starting point of the history of the German church. The Bishop Avitus of Vienne, who sent the king a congratulatory letter, foresaw as a consequence of this action that the Frankish king would become the successor of the ruler of the Western Roman Empire, and that the Christianization of Germany would proceed from the Franks.

Chlodowech's conversion proved to be a powerful example, which was followed by many. He himself founded churches and cloisters, made rich grants with the generosity that was part of the ideal Teutonic king, and protected bishops and hermits. There were, nevertheless, many, even in the king's immediate environment, who remained heathen. No coercion was used against these, at least not by Chlodowech himself, although Childebert I, fifty years after his father's death, promulgated an edict that put an end to religious toleration and forbade heathen images, banquets, songs, and dances. Gradually, and without a sign of a struggle, paganism disappeared among the Franks. While alongside of Christian belief and usage there still continued to exist for a long time

numerous heathen customs, and the synods, especially those held at Orleans, had to inveigh against sacrificatory feasts, conjurations, worship of trees, springs, rocks, and various kinds of commingling of paganism with Christianity, yet the organization of the church became gradually more firmly established and its influence upon the people more marked. At first this influence was an outward one and did not penetrate very rapidly into the moral nature of the people. Chlodowech, after his conversion, was still the same faithless man, who did not shrink from inciting a son to patricide or from slaying kinsmen with his own hand. His successors were even worse. The horrors of the Merovingian royal house have rarely been surpassed in history, and while the morals of the royal family in the present instance probably do not indicate the general standard of morality, that standard was doubtless none too high. But the church could abide its time. Its influence gradually percolated the nation at large, and it was from the kingdom of the Franks that Christianity was disseminated among the German tribes.

The German peoples were Christianized first by Goths and Romans and subsequently by Franks and missionaries from Ireland and England. In the case of some tribes we know little or nothing as to the particular circumstances of their conversion. So the Lombards were converted to Arianism as early as the end of the fifth century. When Alboin came to Italy he was a Christian, but it was not until the days of Pope Gregory I that the union with Rome followed, brought about more especially through the influence of the queen Theudelinde, who was a Bavarian princess of Frankish descent. We notice very little, however, of paganism among this people, although we have already seen that it was by no means poor in historical legends — embodying as usual mythical elements — that had received poetical treatment.

The Alemanni in Southern Germany were still heathen at the end of the sixth century, worshipping, as Agathias tells us, trees, rivers, and mountains, and offering horses in sacrifice. And yet their country, where Romans had so long held sway, showed decided traces of the presence of Christianity. The first Irish missionary found Christian priests there who dwelt peacefully in the midst of the heathen. The earliest missionaries among them were Columbanus and his pupil Gallus, who labored in the seventh century near the lakes of Zurich and Constance. The former once found heathen and Christians jointly taking part in a beer sacrifice to Wuotan. Apart from this, their *vitae* furnish few characteristic details concerning the paganism of this tribe. The *matres*, whose three images were worshipped at Bregenz, we have already surmised to be divinities of Keltic origin.[1] The Irish missionaries found patrons in the Frankish kings, while the *pactus Alamannorum*,[2] drawn up by Chlotachar II, served the double purpose of drawing closer the bond of union with the Frankish realm and of promoting the spread of Christianity. However, not only did heathen customs continue to survive, but a part of the population even remained hostile to Christianity. Pirmin, who labored among them in the eighth century, in the time of Charles Martel, was still forced to wage a hard battle against survivals of heathen customs. The people worshipped and made vows to stones, trees, and springs; the women invoked Minerva when spinning; for marriages Friday was the favorite day, and in other ways, too, attention was paid to lucky and unlucky days; herbs and amber served as amulets; credence was given to weather sorcerers and soothsaying women; heathen songs and dances were popular, and magic potions in use against sickness and evil spirits. In this résumé of

[1] See p. 88.

[2] A code of Alemannic law. See Pertz, MG., *Leges*, III, 34, and Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 310.

features common to the popular belief of many tribes, the name of a goddess Minerva is especially striking.

A connected history of the Bavarians before their conversion is not furnished by any source at our command. Even their descent is uncertain. Their ancestors have variously been held to be those Marcomanni, whose queen, Fritigil, had come into contact with Ambrose of Milan, or those Rugii, Heruli, and Skiri in whose midst Severinus lived, or else the Quadi,[1] of whom the historian Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that they swore solemn oaths by their swords. Of their paganism we know practically nothing. Their contact with Christianity was at first only sporadical, through Goths and Romans ; subsequently Irish missionaries worked among them and they also came under the influence of the Franks. The ducal family of the Agilulfingi was itself of Frankish origin.

Among the Thuringians the history of the successive streams of influence is repeated in a thoroughly typical form. We meet among them, successively, the Arian-Gothic, the Catholic-Frankish, the Irish missions, and the organization of the church by the English Boniface, who became their bishop. The details belong to church history. Christianity does not, however, seem to have made its way so very readily among them. As late as the eighth century we find Willebrord complaining of Christian priests who offer sacrifices to heathen divinities (*Jovi mactantes*), while, on the other hand, heathen are fond of administering baptism, which they regard as a magic charm.

Characteristically heathen traits are better represented among the Frisians and Saxons than among the peoples that we have hitherto considered. The Frisians occupied a strip of land, not extending far into the interior, along the coast of the North Sea, from Flanders (Sinkfal, near Bruges) up to Sleswick.

[1] According to H. Kirchmayr, *Der altdeutsche Volksstamm der Quaden* (2 vols., 1888–1893).

The history of their conversion (677–785) we know from contemporaneous Frankish, but not from native sources. It embraces several periods, intimately connected with their struggles against the Franks, which broke forth ever anew. The missionaries who preached among them were mostly Anglo-Saxons: Wilfrid, Willehad, Willebrord, Winfrid (Boniface). Liudger alone was of Frisian origin. The Frankish kings did everything within their power to further the spread of Christianity among them. As early as 622 Dagobert, of Austrasia, had founded a chapel in Utrecht and had given orders to baptize and evangelize the Frisians, but with little success. Wilfrid, who had accidentally stranded on the Frisian coast, was received kindly by king Aldgild. Redbad I, on the contrary, showed an inveterate hatred towards Christianity. As often as the Frankish yoke was shaken off, persecution of the Christians followed.

This marked hostility against Christianity is by no means to be attributed solely to national pride or political fears. The Frisians were attached to their heathen religion, which was at the time still in a flourishing state. We read of sacred groves, of springs, of temples in which treasures were stored. On Helgoland there were several temples. The great god Fosite was worshipped there; water from the holy spring might be drawn only in silence, and the cattle grazing round about it were not allowed to be touched. As late as the eleventh century we hear that the island was regarded as sacred by Norse seafarers. Even after their conversion some observances derived from paganism were still retained in Frisian law. In the century that marks the period of struggle between the old and new religion, known to us chiefly from the lives of the missionaries, the Frisians long remained faithful to their ancient religious usages. When Willebrord, on his return from his fruitless mission among the Danes, landed on Helgoland he defied the wrath of Fosite by baptizing several Frisians with

water from the sacred spring. He is brought into the presence of the king as one under sentence of death, but Redbad does not deviate from the custom according to which the lot was to decide concerning the life or death of the prisoner, and when this is found favorable to the Christian the king sets him free. Subsequently Liudger succeeds in accomplishing on the island sacred to Fosite what his predecessor had failed in; he replaces the heathen temples with Christian churches. Liudger's mother was Liafborg, and of her we are told that, in accordance with the wishes of a wicked grandmother, she was to have been put to death immediately after birth, but the compassionate wife of a neighbor saved the child's life by placing a little honey upon its lips, it being considered obligatory that a child which had already partaken of some food should be brought up. The material at our command is extremely meagre, but from such accounts it appears that life was to a large extent bound up in religious observances and duties. Everywhere the gods play an essential part in the lives of these Frisian heathen. Chief among them are Wodan, his sons Thuner and Tiu, and his spouse Fria, all of whom we know only from their use as names of days of the week. Concerning Fosite alone are we more fully informed, but perhaps this too is only another name under which the chief of all gods, Wodan, was worshipped. That the service of these gods was by no means dead is proved by the fanaticism which could be evoked among its followers, — a fanaticism to which Boniface fell a victim on the 5th of June, 755, near Dokkum.

The Saxons showed themselves no less hostile toward the new religion. The first who, towards the end of the seventh century, preached the gospel among them, the "white" and the "black" Ewald,[1] fell as martyrs. Not long after Suidbert,

[1] So called on account of the difference in the color of their hair. Bede, *Hist. eccl. gent. Angl.*, V, 10.

the friend and companion of Willebrord, had converted the Bructeri; this tribe fell a prey to the onslaughts of the heathen Saxons.[1] Only with the greatest difficulty and after repeated expeditions did Charles the Great succeed in subjugating the Saxons and in compelling them to accept Christianity. They renounced their new faith again and again, and on such occasions persecution of Christian kinsmen was not lacking. Even after the chiefs had been baptized in 785, and remained true to their vows, there broke forth a new popular uprising, though not under their leadership. The destruction of the Eresburg (772), where the army of Charles was for three entire days engaged in the razing of sanctuaries, and where large treasures were seized, the slaughter of 4500 captive Saxons at Verden (782), the suppression of the great popular uprising (792),— all these measures proved unavailing. Charles was forced to transplant large colonies of Saxons to other districts of Germany; by this means alone was he able to tranquillize the country.

These examples will serve to show how deep rooted the ancestral religion was in the hearts of the people. They worshipped their dread gods with human sacrifices. From the capitularies issued by Charles the Great for the observance of the Saxons, we know something about the heathen customs that were forbidden on pain of death. Irminsul, the national shrine near Eresburg, razed to the ground by Charles, is variously spoken of in the sources as *fanum*, *lucus*, or *idolum*. Evidently neither temple, nor grove, nor image were lacking. Of the Irminsul itself, Rudolph of Fulda[2] says: "truncum ligni non parvae magnitudinis in altum erectum sub divo colebant, patria eum lingua Irminsul appellantes, quod latine dicitur universalis columna, quasi sustinens omnia," *i.e.* "a wooden pillar of unusual size in the open air, worshipped in

[1] See Bede, *Hist. eccl. gent. Angl.*, V, 10–12.
[2] MG. II, 676.

common, and whose destruction was a national calamity." We cannot here discuss the various views held concerning this Irminsul. The pillar destroyed in 772 was not, however, unique of its kind; we read of other instances of the existence of an Irminsul among the Saxons. No weight is to be attached to the view of Widukind, who would identify Irmin with Hermes, combining the latter with Mars.[1] It is not at all clear whether this Irmin is to be taken as the god of the sky or of war. More likely the word does not at all indicate that this pillar was dedicated to the service of any one god. Irmin here signifies "large," "mighty," and on this people's pillar, this *universalis columna*, the welfare and the existence of a tribal community, in the present instance of a division of the Saxons (the Engern), depended. Other statements that have been made concerning it at one time or another amount to little more than mere speculation.[2] The Saxons who became converts were required, on the occasion of their baptism, to abjure their old gods. The formula of renunciation mentions Thuner, Wodan, Saxnot, and the *unholdun*, *i.e.* the other remaining gods. A large number of ecclesiastical documents of a similar character, decrees of councils, lists of idolatrous practices, sermons against idolatry, penitentiaries, and the writings of such authors as Regino, abbot of Prüm in Lorraine (about 900), and Burchard of Worms (the beginning of the eleventh century), tell us of the paganism which still continued to flourish not only among the Saxons but among other German tribes as well. A long list might be made of the idolatrous practices recorded in such documents as the *indiculus superstitionum* and the *homilia de sacrilegiis*. We learn from these sources that in many localities sacrifices to Jupiter or Mercury, the bringing of offerings to the dead, and the worshipping of trees and

1 Or confounding him with Ares?

2 Compare more especially Mannhardt, *Baumkultus der Germanen*, pp. 303 ff., and Vilmar, *Deutsche Altertümer im Heliand*, p. 62.

springs still continued. On fixed days, especially on New Year's day, and at eclipses of the sun and moon, people went about apparelled in the most fantastic manner. Much attention was paid also to lucky and unlucky days. Witchcraft of various kinds was resorted to, to ward off evil, to heal sickness, and to cause storms. Divination practices, in many forms, were in vogue, the names of the gods on such occasions being frequently invoked. Our sources show very conclusively that it cost infinite pains to eradicate the belief in magic charms and formulas. Much of it remained alive in popular belief; even to-day there exist phrases that keep the names of the old gods from being forgotten. Such survivals of paganism fall, however, within the domain of folklore, which will be treated in a subsequent chapter. The clergy who combated this paganism had evidently no eye for either its character or its origin. When we read that women at night ride with Diana or Herodias "cum daemonum turba,"[1] there may lie concealed at the bottom of this tradition an indigenous belief in witches, but it does not appear that this is either original or very ancient. Diana and Herodias are after all not Teutonic. At the same time it cannot be denied that this whole literature bears testimony to the persistent character of Teutonic paganism.

Even richer is the harvest to be gathered from the Old German literature in the various vernacular dialects. We possess first of all a fairly large number of magic formulas, in which, it may be surmised, Christ and the saints have usurped the places of old Teutonic deities. But among these magic formulas there are two that are purely heathen, discovered by G. Waitz in 1841, in a manuscript of the tenth century in the cathedral chapter at Merseburg. These are presumably somewhat older than the manuscript itself; according to some authorities, they go back to the eighth century. They make mention of a number of gods of a German, possibly

[1] "With a horde of demons."

Thuringian, tribe. The two formulas are in alliterative verse, and are incantations to be sung apparently in a fixed, invariable measure, and to serve the purpose, the first of loosing bonds, the second of healing a lame horse. In the latter case the incantation was doubtless to be accompanied by the use of a magic charm. The conjuration proper is in each case preceded by the relation of an occurrence in the divine world, and these few lines have at times been dignified with the name of epic narrative. The first of these conjurations, in a literal rendering which destroys the alliteration, is as follows:

> Once the Idisi sat down, sat down here and there.
> Some fastened bonds, some held back the host,
> Some tugged at the fetters:
> Leap forth from the bonds, escape from the enemy.

The second, somewhat longer, is as follows:

> Phol and Wodan rode to the wood,
> Then the foot of Balder's colt was wrenched.
> Then Sinthgunt charmed it, Sun(na) her sister,
> Then Frija charmed it, Vol(la) her sister:
> Then Wodan charmed it, as he well knew how.

This is followed by the four lines of the incantation proper.

We are not here concerned with pointing out the unquestionably close correspondence between these conjurations and similar ones in the Norse Edda, nor with indicating the more remote, though by no means forced, parallels in Finnish and even Hindu magic, but with drawing from these few lines all the information that they contain concerning Teutonic heathenism. First of all, then, it appears that the magic power, elsewhere frequently attributed to the calling out of the name of a divinity, is here associated with the imitation or repetition of a formula first used by a god; so, at any rate, in the second conjuration. In the first the connection between the opening scene of the Idisi at their work and the conjuration proper is

not perfectly clear. Of still greater importance is the fact that we are here introduced to divinities known to tribes in Germany. First among these are the Idisi, women at work during the battle, reminding us, therefore, of the Norse Walkyries. They are divided into three groups: one group places chains on the prisoners of war, another holds back the hostile army, the third looses the bonds of the prisoners in the hostile camp. The second conjuration mentions a number of divinities by name. Phol and Wodan rode out together, and the horse of Balder stumbled or sprained its foot. The question to just what divinities reference is made here has been variously answered. If Balder, in the second line, could be taken as an appellative, in the sense of lord, — a supposition which is, however, wholly unwarranted, — then it might refer to Wodan as well as Phol. But who is this Phol? We can scarcely agree with Bugge, who recognizes in him the apostle Paul, thus assuming that the conjuration has already borrowed one of its figures from Christianity. Even if we regard Phol, which actually occurs in German names of places, as another German name of Balder, this would still leave the question unanswered why the proper name Baldeŕ receives, in the second verse, a different designation from what it has in the first. To read Phol as Vol and to identify the latter with the goddess of the same name mentioned in the fourth verse is wholly inadmissible. It has been suggested that Phol is merely a corruption of Apollo. If so, the Apollo-Balder of this conjuration would be paralleled by the Mars Thingsus and the Hercules Magusanus. The combination is, however, far from convincing and can in no way be supported from other sources. The question therefore remains an open one. It is possible that Phol and Balder after all belong together. At any rate, we here possess from a German source, as in the case of the Anglo-Saxon genealogies from an English quarter, a confirmation of the originally Teutonic character of Balder. Four goddesses are mentioned, but

commentators are not agreed as to whether all four or only two were present. The translation given above left this undecided, but probably we shall have to read: *Sinthgunt*, *Sun's sister*, and *Frija*, *Vol's sister*. Of these Frija alone (wife of Wodan), chief of the goddesses, is known to us from other sources. In the present instance she does not seem to occupy an especially prominent place alongside of the others, unless indeed we assume a climax in the conjurations: first Sinthgunt made the attempt, but in vain; thereupon (the more powerful) Frija, but likewise in vain; Wodan alone succeeded. Here too, then, we find witchcraft practised first by the goddesses (women); but as the case proved too serious, Wodan himself had to lend a helping hand.

The only pure remnants of German paganism that we possess demanded this somewhat detailed treatment. The other monuments that we are called upon to discuss are of Christian origin, but paganism has left more or less distinct traces of its impress on them. The first is a short prayer in prose, prefaced by nine lines of alliterative verse. The manuscript was found in the Bavarian cloister of Wessobrunn, and the monument has hence been christened the Wessobrunn Prayer; but the verses themselves are of Saxon origin (eighth century), as is apparent from the language as well as from the contents, which make mention of the sea. The subject-matter is wholly Christian. The burden is the almighty God, who, ere earth and sky, tree and mountain were, ere sun and moon shone, ere the sea was, when all about was void, was already then surrounded by many good spirits, he the most bounteous of men, the holy God. It is extremely tempting to recognize in this a fragment of heathen Teutonic cosmogony. In that case a comparison may be made with a few lines from the beginning of Völuspa, while the correspondences between the Old German and Norse poems pass as proof that the ancient Teutons had a conception of a large, void, yawning abyss,

which was at the beginning of things. Many have yielded to this temptation, and, following in the footsteps of J. Grimm and K. Müllenhoff, believe that they have rescued a fragment of genuine Teutonic heathenism. While such an interpretation is not wholly inconceivable, we shall after all have to admit with Wackernagel that there is absolutely nothing in these lines that compels, or even justifies, such a conclusion. All the features are Christian, so, for example, the almighty God surrounded by angels, who lived before the world was, while the description of this God as *manno miltisto*[1] is strongly reminiscent of a Teutonic popular king; this interpretation seems to me preferable to that of Kern, who would find in it a mythological formula expressive of the bounteous sun god.

The Bavarian poem *Muspilli* dates from the ninth century. It contains altogether somewhat over one hundred lines, in which the fate of the soul after death, the end of the world, *i.e.* the universal conflagration, preceded by the struggle between Eliah and the Antichrist, and the last judgment, are depicted. As will be obvious from this summary, we here too have Christian and not heathen mythology. It seems forced, therefore, to assume that Eliah and the Antichrist represent the Christian rendering of two originally heathen combatants, such as Thor and the Midhgardh-serpent of Norse mythology. The universal conflagration, also, is a conception that is of Christian rather than Teutonic origin. Not but that the Christian idea has been adapted and developed by the Teutons. The combat has been put into the foreground; the last judgment resembles a Teutonic *thing*, and the sins to be expiated are those of the poet's own time. While the contents are therefore in no way directly heathen, the title itself, *Muspilli*, is part of the Teutonic word stock. It tells us that the earth was expected to come to an end, but does not indicate whether this idea itself was old or new in the time of the poet. It is quite conceivable

[1] "The most generous of men."

that it arose among the Teutons only through their contact with Christianity.

The same considerations as in the case of *Muspilli* demand that some attention should be paid to the *Heliand*, a poem that is intrinsically of far greater importance. It might seem as if this Old Saxon treatment of the gospel history, dating from the first half of the ninth century, and based on the gospel concordance of Tatian, could in no way lay claim to be included in a handbook of Teutonic mythology, and yet on every side the poem exhibits features that excite interest from a mythological point of view. The first of these is that the language unconsciously conserves the old word stock, so that not a few expressions in the *Heliand* bear witness to the heathen mode of thinking, which had only quite recently been abandoned. In the things that happen the poet recognizes *metodo giscapu*, which Vilmar translates as "decrees of the disposing ones" (*mensorum decreta*), but which perhaps merely signifies "what has been determined" by fate. For the divine power that measures and disposes, the word "metod" is used a few times, which is also known to us from Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse. The power of fate is called "wurd," and still other traces of paganism and polytheism surviving in the language might be enumerated. But of still greater importance is the fact that the Saxon poet reproduces the gospel narrative most naïvely in the setting of his own time. Landscape, mode of life, character, all has been colored to be in keeping with the Saxon surroundings. Such scenes as the storm on the sea and the catching of the fish are depicted most vividly, and the feast at Cana is a merry drinking bout. Combat stands in the foreground; the devil is the arch-enemy, the disciples are brave warriors who achieve heroic deeds in defense of their chief. Their fealty is of a simple and resolute character, not marred by doubt or hesitancy; their hatred of the enemy violent. The struggle has therefore been transferred from the inner to

the outer man, and the conception of Jesus himself is in keeping with this. He is not the Man of Sorrows, nor yet the heavenly Son of God of the Catholic church, but now the brave Teutonic chief, who valiantly leads his men to victory, and then again the wealthy, generous Teutonic popular king, who gloriously traverses his land to teach, judge, heal, and to battle, and who in the end in defeat itself outwits the enemy and gains the victory, — a Christ different certainly from that of the gospels, but one that was living and real to the Saxons.

From such works as the *Heliand* and from the subsequently discovered fragments of an Old Saxon paraphrase of Genesis, much can doubtless be gathered that is of importance for the study of the language and antiquities of the ancient Teutons. There is evidence on all sides that paganism had only recently been abandoned. We should, however, seek in vain in these poems for direct testimony concerning the ancient Teutonic religion. In fact, one of their salient characteristics is the naïve combination of Christian subject-matter with heathen thought and feeling. The Saxons took a lively interest in the gospel narrative. They felt like Chlodowech, who remarked that matters would have taken a different turn on Golgotha if he and his Franks had been present. These Teutons put new wine into old bottles.

CHAPTER VII

THE GERMAN HEROIC SAGA

"The production of an epic poem demands an historic achievement which shall have laid hold of a people's imagination, to such an extent as to cause the divine legend to engraft itself on it, the one element in this way being postulated by the other." [1] "The time of birth of the Teutonic heroic saga is the so-called migration of nations." [2] "The truly typical, ideal heroes have this characteristic in common, that for all future time, each in relationship to his own people, they are considered ideal personages, to whom the people proudly call themselves akin." [3] These quotations indicate the points of view that are of paramount importance in a consideration of the heroic sagas: they belong to the domains of mythology, history, and literature. Hence, also, the many-sided treatment of which they are susceptible.

The historical course which we are following involves a separate treatment of related material. We shall here discuss only the German heroic sagas that have their historic background in the period of migrations. Subsequently, we shall also consider those that deal with the life of the Vikings and the fortunes of the Scandinavian peoples.

The heroic sagas, accordingly, claim our attention from a special point of view. The treatment from the literary-historical side, which is intrinsically the most important treatment, does not come within our scope. Of the modification and the

[1] J. Grimm, *Gedanken über Mythos, Epos und Geschichte.*
[2] B. Symons, *Germanische Heldensage*, p. 2.
[3] Sv. Grundtvig, *Udsigt*, p. 8.

additions made in the course of time to the original constituents, we need take cognizance only in so far as they serve to bring these earlier elements into clearer light. We are here concerned solely with the aspect of the heroic sagas as witnesses to the history of religion, and we must accordingly, as far as feasible, leave out of account the transformation which they have undergone at the hand of medieval poetry. In their origins at least they go back to the period of migrations, when the Teutonic peoples, while to a large extent already converted, still adhered to heathen ideas and customs.

This connection with the great migration, and with the Viking life of the North, is an essential part of the Teutonic heroic saga. In olden days, as we learn from Tacitus, the memory of the past and of heroes like Arminius was kept alive by songs. At a later period, Charles the Great and even medieval personages such as duke Ernst of Suabia were celebrated in the legends, to which a poetical form was given. The various collections that have been made of the folklore of certain districts reveal to us a number of legends associated with definite localities, castles, forests, and lakes. Not all of this material, however, is to be included in the heroic saga proper, but only those traditions in which the memory of the migrations, that great epic period of the Teutonic peoples, still lingers, and which are celebrated in the German national epics. The earliest testimony concerning these heroic sagas goes back to the time of the migration period itself, and is to be found in such historians as Cassiodorus and Jordanes. The rapid and wide spread of this epic material is apparent in the oldest product of Anglo-Saxon literature, *Widsith*, the nucleus of which goes back to the sixth century. We there find summed up, almost in the form of a catalogue, a number of traditions concerning peoples belonging in part to lands far distant. Wandering minstrels treated in epic form the fortunes of individuals and of nations. Even at a very early period mythical

elements were woven into the fabric of these narratives, although it is no longer possible in each particular instance to determine the historical or mythical origin of the individual threads. The coloring of the whole, as well as the character sketches of the individual figures, is the handiwork of poetry; and, in so far as the ethical element is concerned, it is extremely difficult to distinguish between what is original and what is of later origin.

We shall first give a brief survey of the historical cycles to which the most important heroic sagas belong, and shall then consider the mythical conceptions. The oldest saga-cycle is that of the East Goths. Over them reigned, about A.D. 375, in Southern Russia, the mighty Ermanaric, *nobilissimus Amalorum*,[1] who, as the historian Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, slew himself at the approach of the wild Huns, in dismay, even before trying the fortunes of battle. Some one hundred and fifty years later Jordanes furnishes us with a semi-legendary story of his life. He caused Sunilda, the wife of a faithless prince of the Rosomoni, to be trampled under the hoofs of horses. Her brothers, Sarus and Ammius, longed to avenge their sister and inflicted a dangerous wound upon the king, who, weakened in this way, could not overcome his fear of the Huns and hence succumbed. The legend received further development in German chronicles and in some songs of the poetic Edda.

The second great figure of the East-Gothic saga is Theodoric, who slew Odoacer and founded the East-Gothic kingdom in Italy. Legend, however, has made this great and powerful king preëminently an exile, and such is the disparity between legend and history at this point that all real connection has been denied. W. Grimm was of the opinion that the identification of the hero of the legend with the historical king was made at a later period. This view, however, is incorrect. The memory of the short-lived glory of the East Goths under the

[1] "The noblest of the Amali."

great Theodoric having become faint, it appears that the legend, besides commingling the fortunes of the individual with those of the people, has confused different periods. Ermanaric and Theodoric, separated in history by more than a century, have in the saga become contemporaries, while Ermanaric has supplanted Odoacer. Reminiscences of Theodoric's youth, of the days of his people's servitude among the Huns, of many a struggle of the East Goths, live on in this cluster of legends. Thus preserved, the legends, without ever being treated in one continuous epic poem, were further developed by the Alemanni, the friends and allies of the East Goths. Medieval German epics deal with a number of episodes from the legends centering around Dietrich of Bern, as Theodoric is there called. His heroic personality has furthermore been introduced into other saga-cycles, more especially into that of the Nibelungen, and he also plays a rôle in various local German legends. From Lower Saxony he was, in the thirteenth century, imported into the North through the medium of the Thidhreks Saga.

An especially striking feature of the epic narratives that deal with Dietrich of Bern is the attitude they assume towards the Huns and their king. The relation between the Huns and the East Goths, and various other Teutonic tribes, was for a considerable length of time friendly in character. Accordingly, the form of the legend that has been handed down by them pictures Etzel (Attila) as a rich and generous Teutonic king, without the least trace of the wild Attila of history or of Frankish tradition. The Teutonic heroic saga reflects the varied character of the relations existing between Teutons and Huns. Thus the legend of Waltharius, of somewhat uncertain origin, and known to us only through secondary sources, pictures the conditions existing at the court of the king of the Huns in the fifth century. The sons and daughters of kings of allied or tributary peoples are living at the court as hostages, well treated but under guard. The Franks are represented by the young hero

Hagen, the Aquitani (West Goths) by Walther, the Burgundians by the young princess Hildigund. Hagen having previously fled, Walther and Hildigund, who are betrothed to each other, also succeed in escaping from the place of their exile, carrying away with them a great store of treasure, which is subsequently the occasion of a combat in the Wasgen (Vosges) Forest between Walther and the Frankish heroes, Hagen and the young king Gunther. All the combatants are wounded and maimed, but in the end they part as friends, each returning to his own land. Whether we can identify the incidents of this narrative with actual historical events is extremely uncertain, but the historical background is at all events unmistakable.[1]

The legends of Hugdietrich and Wolfdietrich originated among the Franks. Hugo Theodoricus (the Franks were called "Hugones") was an illegitimate son of Chlodowech, who at first experienced some difficulty in maintaining his authority, but in the end greatly increased the power of his kingdom, Austrasia, and overthrew (511–534) the Thuringian power. The point of departure of the various forms of the narratives that we possess concerning him is to be sought in the popular epic songs, in which the Franks celebrated his deeds. His son Theodobert likewise had to rely upon the fealty of his men to maintain himself against his kindred. The main features of these historical accounts may readily be recognized in the legends of Hugdietrich and Wolfdietrich. Poetic fiction of a later period combined these legends with other narratives, more particularly with the myth of Ortnit, and transferred the scene of action to the East, to Constantinople. This would seem to point to the period of the Crusades.

The latter observation applies also to the German minstrel poem of *King Rother*. The king's faithful messengers, imprisoned at Constantinople, are freed by him, after they had recognized him through his singing. Without revealing his

[1] R. Heinzel, *Ueber die Walthersage* (SWA. 1888).

identity, he wins the king's daughter, who gladly follows a prince who had such brave servants, and who had wooed her in so chivalrous a fashion. The story is told in the style of a fairy tale. A point of contact in the subject-matter may be discerned in the history of the Lombards. King Rother wins the Eastern princess in the same way in which, according to Paulus Diaconus, Authari had wooed the Bavarian Theudelinde.

Through numerous sources the Siegfried Saga is the one most completely known to us. For its study we have at our command, first of all, the songs of the Norse Edda, which, while not in perfect accord with one another, yet represent an older tradition than the High German sources, and whose gaps are filled in by the prose Vǫlsunga Saga. In addition to this, the Thidhreks Saga gives the narrative in the form it had assumed in Lower Saxony. The High German tradition finally is represented by the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Klage*. Setting aside the divergences to be found within each branch, and more especially in the Norse sources, these are the three great branches of the legend as it has come down to us. There is also a later epic treatment in a poem called the *Horned Siegfried*, which has been preserved in chap-books and elsewhere, in very imperfect form. We are here, however, not concerned with either a survey of this literature or an exhaustive treatment of the saga. We wish merely to point out that while, unlike the legends of the Amelungen, it is not entirely based on history, it yet has strong points of connection with historical facts. Such are not, however, to be looked for in the case of the chief hero, Siegfried. I am unable to recognize in him either Arminius, the Cheruscan, or the murdered Austrasian king Sigebert, the husband of Brunehilde, but believe him to be entirely mythical in origin. On the other hand, the alliterating names of the kings Gunther, Godomar (for whom Gernot was substituted), and Giselher are assuredly those of Burgundian princes; and

the catastrophe of the Nibelungen represents a reminiscence of the downfall of the Burgundian kingdom in the Rhenish Palatinate, where king Gundicarius and his race had fallen before the onslaught of the Huns. The connection of the narrative with the Huns is therefore founded on historical fact, and it is possible to go even further in the identification of features of the saga with real events. Attila died in 453, in the night of his nuptials with a Teutonic princess, Ildico, and rumor would have it that the latter had taken bloody vengeance on him for the downfall of her race. She may have been a Burgundian. In the older Norse version of the Nibelungen Saga, Gudrun avenges her brothers on Atli; not as in the *Nibelungenlied*, where Kriemhild avenges her first husband, Siegfried, on her treacherous kinsmen. However this may be, whether or not one recognizes in Gudrun-Kriemhild the Ildico of history, it remains an established fact that the Nibelungen Saga too bears in its origin the mighty impress of historic facts, of the downfall of the Burgundians. It is equally certain that history constitutes only one of the two sources from which this saga has drawn. We must now turn to a consideration of the mythical elements of the heroic sagas.

By way of preface, it may be stated that we are not to look for god-myths in the heroic saga. This has indeed been frequently done, involving the further problem as to which gods lie hidden behind the characters of Siegfried, Dietrich, and Beowulf. According to this view, the heroic saga is a transformed and somewhat degenerated god-myth, and the question then presents itself whether this and that character is a Wodan-hero, a Donar-hero, a Freyr, or a Baldr. At present it is recognized that such questions rest on no real basis. The heroic saga has been formed quite independent of, and parallel with, the god-myth. Even though we find here and there the same myths, this does not prove that the one is derived from the other. The opinion that the figures of gods may be

recognized in the persons of heroes is still widespread in Greek mythology, but so far as Teutonic mythology is concerned, it has been entirely abandoned by the best scholars. Furthermore, among the Teutons there are scarcely any traces of hero cult. The heroes whom we encounter in the heroic saga are, to a large extent, historical personages and have not been deified. Even those who are entirely mythical in character are not objects of worship. The gleanings from the study of the heroic saga for the history of religion consist solely of a knowledge of the mythical formulas, the value of which is, however, not to be underrated.

We find the myth of the Harlungen combined with the legend of Ermanaric, a union effected by the Alemanni, by whom, as we have before had occasion to observe, the complex of East-Gothic legends was preserved and handed down to posterity. Several German local names contain a reminiscence of this myth; so, for example, the Harlungen Mountain in Brandenburg and at Breisach in Baden. In this latter place the story was localized on account of its agreement in name with the treasure Brisingamen. The main form of this myth, which has come down to us with all manner of variations, is as follows: Two brothers, in German sources called Ambrica and Fridila, possess a great treasure, among which is the jewel Brisingamen. At the instigation of the faithless Sibicho, they are enticed away from their trusty monitor Eckehart and treacherously slain by Ermanaric. Inasmuch as Jordanes, who did not know the German Harlungen myth, tells the story of two brothers, Ammius and Sarus, who avenged their sister Sunilda on king Ermanaric, an historical element may have been introduced into the mythical narrative. The Eddic poems, making use of later myth-combinations, have linked the story of Sǫrli and Hamdir to that of Gudrun, the wife of Sigurd. The youths who suffer death, because they carried off the betrothed of the god of day instead of taking her to his home, or because their

adversary covets the treasure of gold which they possess, appear to be two Dioscuri. They bring the light of dawn, but are themselves slain by the day. A dawn-myth is, therefore, probably the nucleus of these narratives, although the later development of the saga has added to it various elements that cannot be explained on the basis of such an origin. In fact, both in the case of the Harlungen and Hartungen, there remain objections to an identification with either the Indian Açvins or the Laconian Dioscuri. Both of these are horsemen, the Açvins even taking their name from this fact, while in the case of the "Teutonic Dioscuri" no mention is made of horse or chariot. Nor is there in the case of the Harlungen and Hartungen any trace of a connection with stars, while both the Açvins and the brothers of Helen present several details pointing to such a connection. Little more remains, therefore, than general points of resemblance: two brothers that have an unmistakable connection with the morning dawn.

Another form of the Dioscuri-myth among the Teutons is the so-called "Hartungen Saga" of Ortnit and Wolfdietrich. It has undergone even greater transformation, and has assimilated more foreign elements, than the Harlungen Saga. The nucleus, as reconstructed by Müllenhoff, is as follows: A hero (Ortnit, Hertnit, the elder Hartung), in combat with a demonic race, the Isungen, gains possession of a beautiful woman (a Walkyrie), who aids him in this very struggle against her own kin. After his discomfiture in a fight with a dragon, his younger brother (Hartheri, for whom Wolfdietrich has been substituted in the German legend) slays the dragon and takes his brother's arms and widow. It will be seen that the myth differs somewhat from that of the Harlungen, and that it cannot be reduced to a simple dawn-myth, although it also has its origin evidently in the alternate struggle between light and darkness. In these narratives concerning Wolfdietrich, the faithful (the Berchtungen) and the faithless (Sabene) are again contrasted. A comparison

of the Hartungen-myth with the two divine brothers of the Nahanarvali mentioned by Tacitus at once suggests itself. The kings of the Vandals, the Asdingi, — with which the Middle High German *Hartunge* has been connected, — men with feminine hairdress,[1] were descended from these Dioscuri, who were worshipped by a priest, *muliebri ornatu*.

Numerous mythical formulas as well as commonplace epic motifs are found in the heroic saga. The hero who intended to be slain is put out as foundling and grows up among strangers; the outcast and wanderer; the hero who fights dragons, — these are a few of the general mythical features recurring in numerous legends and which may or may not be traced back to phenomena of nature. We meet them again and again in the epic narratives dealing with Dietrich, Wolfdietrich, and other Teutonic heroes. The most famous of these epic types is represented by the oldest epic poem existing in the German language, the *Hildebrand Lay*. The combat between father and son in its different stages, the introductory dialogue, the token of recognition, and the tragic issue recur in the mythology of numerous nations, most strikingly in the Persian epic and in the Irish heroic sagas. An historical connection, more particularly with the Persian tale of Rustem and Sohrab, has frequently been assumed; Uhland especially carries this hypothesis very far and also finds correspondences in names and episodes between Persian and Teutonic sagas. The Irish narrative of Cuchulin and Conlach, too, presents striking points of resemblance; while the Greek story of Odysseus and Telegonos, the Russian of Ilja, and still other tales, show, at any rate, important parallels. Unless we seek for the explanation of these parallels in a nature-myth, or, as others would have it, in a custom of law, then the problem becomes a very difficult one. It is scarcely possible either to regard the coincidence as accidental, or, considering the wide dissemination

[1] Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, Chapter 22.

of the story, to assume a literary dependence, or, finally, to regard the tale with all its accessory episodes as forming a part of the common possessions of the primitive race. It would seem most likely, therefore, that the nucleus of the story is after all a nature-myth, a supposition which does not, of course, preclude the possibility that certain correspondences of detail are due to literary dependence.[1]

Dietrich is the most popular heroic figure in a large section of Germany. Of him, as the *Quedlingburg Chronicle* tells us, "rustici cantabant olim,"[2] and numerous feats are related, in which he slays storm giants, engages in combat with dwarfs, and in general occupies the position of the thunder god. These myths are as a rule of a strictly local character. That the hero is represented as a Donar furnishes no ground for regarding this as his real character. Dietrich himself has nothing in common with the thunder god, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary. What so often takes place in mythology has happened to him. As a popular hero he has in a number of myths filled the vacant place of the god, — an interchange which proves nothing as to his real nature.

We have now reached the most mythical of the heroic sagas, that of Siegfried and the Nibelungen. The main features of this narrative, which shows considerable variation in the numerous forms in which it has come down to us, are as follows: A hero grows up in the forest, under the care of a cunning smith and without knowledge of his parents. In combat with a dragon he acquires boundless treasure. Riding through flames of fire (the Vafrlogi), he liberates the maid on the mountain, and awakes her from her magic sleep. Under the influence of a draught of oblivion he forsakes her and comes into the power of a demonic race of beings, the Nibelungen, whose sister he weds, and through whom he loses his first

[1] Compare O. L. Jiriczek, *Deutsche Heldensagen*, I, pp. 275–289.
[2] "The peasants of old sung."

bride, the treasure, and, finally, also his life. Such is the nucleus of the narrative that may with some degree of probability be reconstructed from the various types that we possess. The Norse version narrates in detail the history of the race of the Vǫlsungen antecedent to that of Siegfried. The treasure, and the curse resting on it, is a motif which obtains great prominence in the Norse version, while in the *Nibelungenlied* it has been entirely abandoned. The different sources vary in respect to the identification of the Walkyrie whom the hero had first won with Brunhild, the bride whom he secures for the prince of the Nibelungen, though it is evident that what was originally a purely mythical narrative has been greatly modified through a union with historical legends. The demonic Nibelungen have been combined with the Burgundian kings. The narrative has, moreover, lost much of its perspicuity, owing to the fact that most of the poets who have handed down the poem did not grasp its original character. In the *Nibelungenlied* the characters — or at any rate Kriemhild — no longer bear any resemblance to a sombre demonic race. It is self-evident that the story, as thus summarized, does not form a unit. It embodies various mythical formulas, common to many narratives, and which, when reduced to their simplest form, do not admit of further explanation. Among these are the rearing of the hero in the forest, his invulnerability with the exception of a single spot, his combat with dragons, the draught of oblivion, the acquisition of the gold.[1] Setting these aside, there remain the accounts of the winning of the bride, the ride through the flames, and the destruction of the hero, who falls a prey to the demons (the Nibelungen). The first of these features, the liberation of the maid on the mountain, is paralleled by such myths as those of Freyr and Gerdhr, Svipdag and Menglǫdh. But here, as always in attempting

[1] Compare for "hoard-legends" J. G. von Hahn, *Sagwissenschaftliche Bibliothek*, Chapter 10.

to interpret myths and to point out mythological parallels, the stories, however simple they may seem, do not permit of an absolutely certain explanation. We recognize in the myth the youthful day hero (Siegfried), who in the morning, after a ride through the light of dawn (Vafrlogi), awakes the sun (Brunhild). But the myth of Freyr and Gerdhr points rather to the earth awakened in the spring by the god of summer. Similarly, in the second part of the story, while the hero is at first victorious, yet the light dies again, day passes into night, the summer into the winter season, Siegfried falls into the power of the Nibelungen and perishes. The general meaning is clear, but we are left in doubt whether the day or the year is in the first instance to be thought of. In any case, it remains certain that Siegfried is a light hero, be it of day or of summer, who rises in splendor, but succumbs finally to the demonic powers of darkness.

The Wieland Saga does not date from the period of migrations, and was, in fact, developed in a region, Saxony, not affected by this movement. It spread very extensively, and has come down to us in an Anglo-Saxon version, in one of the oldest Eddic poems, in the Thidhreks Saga, and, pictorially, on an ancient Anglo-Saxon runic casket. The cultural background of this saga, the working of metals and rendering fire subservient to the purposes of mankind, is very ancient. The cunning smith, no doubt here as elsewhere, represents an old fire-god or fire-demon. Not that we mean to identify Wieland (Völund) with one of the gods of the Teutonic pantheon. He was doubtless never worshipped as a god, but various features of the legend, more especially Wieland's servitude and vengeance, point to an old fire-myth. There are no grounds for supposing that antique motifs have received poetic setting in this myth.[1]

[1] This view is maintained by W. Golther, *Die Wielandsage und die Wanderung der fränkischen Heldensage* (*Germania*, XXXIII), and by H. Schück, *Volundsagan*, AfnF. IX.

It is extremely tempting to see in the heroic saga the conditions and, especially, the moods of the period to which the tales themselves transport us, but there is no warrant for this view. The poems are too far removed in time from the period of migration to reproduce in any way the tone and coloring of the life of that time. The characters, the ideals, the conditions, are for the most part those of the later Middle Ages, the period in which the poems were composed. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility of its embodying features which reflect older conditions; for instance, in the picture drawn of Teutonic kings, with their long blond hair; in the fealty that constitutes such a close bond of union between them and their men; in the faithfulness of the wife, who wishes to die with her husband or avenge him; in the violence and savagery of the encounters; in the uncertainty of the conditions surrounding life, producing a fatalistic feeling, through the realization that sorrow follows joy. But this is all of too general a character and too vague in its outline to be regarded as depicting the life of the migration period. The fatalistic character of the mood may in its coloring be Christian as well as pagan.

What then justifies our appealing to the heroic sagas as witnesses concerning this period? The fact that the historical groundwork dates from the age of migrations, and was then amalgamated with the mythical material already existing. Only in the case of a few particulars has the claim been made that they are derived from classical literature, and even this claim has met with limited acceptance. We may therefore regard it as firmly established that both the historical and mythical elements of the heroic saga are Teutonic.

This result acquires considerable importance, when we consider the meagreness of the early data available for the study of Teutonic mythology. We now know that the mythic conception of the struggle between light and darkness, as symbolized in the day and year myths, was current among the

Teutons. The characteristic features of nature-mythology are unmistakable in the story of the Harlungen and in that of Siegfried and the Nibelungen. Besides, giants and dwarfs constitute an important element of popular belief, though chiefly in the later epical narratives dealing with Dietrich. A number of widespread motifs for stories, such as combats with dragons, with or without a mythical background, are made use of in the Teutonic heroic saga, while the evidence does not suggest even the probability that they have been borrowed from other quarters. The clearer we recognize that much among the possessions of the Teutons is of foreign origin, the greater the need to emphasize what is of native origin, and in these heroic sagas, the subject-matter of which in its main outlines goes back to the migration period, it is the poetic imagination, the blending of reminiscences of the past with nature-myths, of the mythical with the historical, as already indicated in the *Germania* of Tacitus, that survive as peculiarly characteristic of the Teutons until the very end, and even beyond the limits of the pagan period.

The mythical formulæ that we can deduce from the heroic saga are, however, few in number. The question whether we must seek impersonations of the gods in them has already been answered in the negative. Even though Müllenhoff's contention, supported by such subtle reasoning that in the myths of heroes several god-myths may be recognized, were proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, — even then these hero narratives would furnish no direct proof that the gods to be detected in them were actually worshipped.

The medieval epics of the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Klage*, and *Kudrun* also, are entirely permeated with Christianity. While mention is made of the fact that Etzel was a heathen, and while the *Klage* even represents him as a Christian who became an apostate, we cannot, as in the case of the *Heliand*, point to pagan survivals in respect to language, customs,

or ideas. All formulas and observances are Christian. Brunhild and Kriemhild attend mass, children are baptized, and the rites at the obsequies of Siegfried are all Christian.[1]

[1] A detailed and thorough treatment of this subject may be found in A. E. Schönbach, *Das Christentum in der altdeutschen Heldendichtung* (1897).

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANGLO-SAXONS

"THERE were no reasons of state to lead the German conquerors in Britain to follow Roman traditions, as in the other provinces of the Empire. There was no native population permeated with Roman culture and ready to communicate this culture to the immigrants." [1] The Teutons that had crossed the North Sea and settled in England were of far purer stock than the tribes of the West and South and the East Teutons of the period of migrations. The Romans, after an occupation of three hundred and fifty years, had evacuated England, leaving behind buildings, walls, inscriptions, and other material evidences of their occupation, but no permanent institutions that outlived their departure. Roman rule in Britain had always borne the character of a military occupation, maintained by the aid of a few legions. England had not, like Gaul, become permeated with Roman culture that outlasted the fall of the Empire. Accordingly, when the Romans left Britain, the British (Keltic) population was thrown practically into a state of anarchy and was left defenseless against the Teutonic incursions. Even as late as the time of the emperor Honorius they in vain besought protection from Rome against these invaders.

Invasions of seafaring Teutons began as early as the fourth century. The Viking expeditions run parallel with the migrations, though they cover a by far longer period. No permanent settlement, however, was effected in England until the British king, Vortigern, in one of his feuds with his neighbors,

[1] B. ten Brink, *Geschichte der englischen Litteratur*, I, p. 12.

was ill-advised enough to call in the aid of the Saxon chief, Hengist. Hengist and Horsa remained in the land where their arms had proved victorious (449). They were followed for about a century by constantly fresh streams of Teutonic immigrants from the peninsula of Jutland and from the mouth of the Elbe. From Jutland the Jutes came, who settled in Kent, from Sleswick the Angles, from Holstein the Saxons. These tribes established small kingdoms along the entire eastern coast of England, pushed back the Keltic population ever further to the west and north, and constantly extended their dominion.

With good reason Freeman has pointed out the great difference existing between the Anglo-Saxon settlement in England and the Frankish in Gaul. While the Franks became wholly Romanized, taking on the language and civilization of the antique world, no such heritage fell to the lot of the Anglo-Saxons. Nor did the conquerors intermingle with the native Keltic population. They pushed them back, and the downfall of the British has been depicted in vivid colors by Gildas (560). The struggle with the Britons and Scots covered a long period and broke out ever anew. As late as the year 603 the Northumbrian Saxons were compelled to drive back the Scots at Degsastan. The Keltic element has, of course, not been exterminated everywhere in England. In the western districts, such as Devonshire and Somerset, it is more widely represented than in the eastern. In the main, however, the Anglo-Saxon conquest involved the supplanting of one people by the other.

Christianity too, which the Britons had adopted about A.D. 200, was rejected by the Anglo-Saxons. For more than one hundred and fifty years they remained true to their heathen traditions. Then the new religion penetrated from two sides. First of all the Keltic (Irish) missionaries, Columba in Iona as early as 563, worked among them. In addition to this, since the year 600, missionaries were sent direct from Rome, of whom

Augustine, who settled in Canterbury, was the first. Some fifty years later Christianity was general among the Anglo-Saxons, in the form which accepted the primacy of Rome. These are the same two currents, the more independent one of the Irish mission, and the papal one, triumphing under the leadership of Boniface, which we have already met in the history of missions among the Germans.

If we possessed a native literature from this period of Anglo-Saxon paganism, it would be of inestimable value as a source for Teutonic mythology. But here again we must be content with what we learn from writings of the period subsequent to the conversion, and with what has continued to live in the traditions of the people. The value of these latter sources has, however, at times been underestimated or, at any rate, they have not been exploited for the study of Teutonic mythology to the extent that would seem desirable, for the fairly rich Anglo-Saxon literature is after all the oldest literature that a Teutonic tribe has produced in a Teutonic language.

Unfortunately, the writer who was most extensively read, and who, relatively speaking, still stood so near to the pagan period of his people, forms an exception to this use of the native language. Bede (672–735) not only wrote in Latin, but was so much preoccupied with the affairs of the church that he viewed the past of his people, whose ecclesiastical history he wrote, entirely through the eyes of a monk. Yet there are a few chapters in Bede that furnish us with some insight into the history of the conversion to Christianity. In Northumbria it was effected in a very peaceful manner, through the preaching of Paulinus during the reign of king Edwin. Bede (II, 13) unrolls for us the picture of a conference, in which the king consults his nobles and also his chief priest Coïfi, in regard to the proposition. The latter at once shows his readiness to give up the old gods. He has never found their service very advantageous, is not convinced of the truth of the old religion, and,

being entirely free from superstitious fear, stands ready to be the first to desecrate and raze the sanctuary with sword and spear. Another of the nobles impresses us more favorably. In a finely conceived simile he tells of the bird that flies into the warm festive hall from the rain and snow without, only to pass out again on the other side: "de hieme in hiemem."[1] Such is man's brief span of life between the unknown past and an unknown future. Why then should we not take heed of the new teaching that gives assurance concerning these things?

It is not, however, to be supposed that the introduction of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons met with no outward opposition. The Mercian king Penda (626–655) fought against it with might and main, till the bitter end. The Northumbrian king Oswald, who fell in battle against him, is regarded as a martyr in the Christian cause, and Bede recounts a number of miracles wrought at his grave or through his relics. The heathen king had hung Oswald's head and dismembered limbs on trees, perhaps as a sacrifice to his gods. But Bede's narrative, diffuse as it is in its account of the miracles, gives us no true insight into the real motives and the significance of king Penda, who, as we learn from Bede himself, did not exterminate the Christians in his realm, although he held them in great contempt. At any rate, when Penda fell in battle against Oswin, the last powerful opponent of Christianity perished. Before the end of the seventh century the organization of the Anglo-Saxon church under the primacy of the pope was completed, and while politically the kingdoms were still separate and distinct, ecclesiastical unity had been effected.

As in Germany, so in England the old paganism lived on after the conversion in numerous magic formulas and observances. While Anglo-Saxon literature has not transmitted any such, like the Merseburg Charms, from the heathen period itself, there are still several in which pagan ideas are clearly

[1] "From winter into winter."

discernible; so in the incantation against rheumatic pains, conceived of as brought into the blood or limbs by the arrows or shafts of gods, elves, or hags (*hagtessan*). In the main the charms were joined to a belief in, and invocation of, powerful elemental spirits. Thus running water possessed magic power for the healing of sickness, a conception which there is no need of deriving from the Christian baptism. Mother Earth, too, called Erce in a field charm, was tilled with all manner of symbolic rites and formulas, which served to promote fertility. The introduction of large numbers of ecclesiastical formulas into these incantations does not conceal their originally pagan character. Though secular and ecclesiastical laws united in inveighing against various forms of divination and witchcraft, such as casting spells on man or beast, magic draughts, the evil eye, and the like, they were not eradicated.

The Anglo-Saxon genealogical tables have already been mentioned in connection with the other tribal sagas.[1] These dreary lists represent in reality the skeleton of numerous legends, and while we are not told that the latter received poetic treatment and development, they must at all events have survived in the imaginations of the people. The genealogies of the royal families have combined names of varied origin. Sceldwa (Scyld), who was identified with the progenitor of the Danish kings, Beaw, and king Offa have all three been imported from the original home of the Anglo-Saxons between the North Sea and the Baltic. Opinions still differ as to what part of these characters and tales is originally the property of the tribes themselves, and what is of Danish origin. While the genealogies, therefore, in their nucleus point to the pre-English period of the Anglo-Saxons, they have been localized in England, and have been transferred to the royal families of the individual kingdoms.

Our knowledge of the deities of Anglo-Saxon paganism is

[1] See Chapter IV, p. 81.

based solely on these genealogies and on proper names. It is, accordingly, impossible to get beyond mere names. Attempts to define the character of these gods must depend upon material drawn from other Teutonic tribes. From the sources at our command, we thus obtain Wodan, Thunor, Tiw, Seaxneat, Bældæg (Baldr), the nicors or water sprites, and possibly some others. In the first component part of such names as Oswald and Oswin we recognize the word signifying god, in Alfred and similar names, the elves. While these gleanings seem meagre, they suffice to prove that the Anglo-Saxons carried the old Teutonic gods with them from their original home. In the heroic sagas of other tribes they also took a lively interest. These Anglo-Saxons celebrated in song the foreign sagas of Ermanaric, Walther, and Wieland, — a fact which indicates a lively intercourse with the various Teutonic tribes of the continent, through whom they became acquainted with these legends.

The greater part of Anglo-Saxon literature bears a Biblical and ecclesiastical character, and yet it was written not in Latin, but in the vernacular. In the vernacular the herdsman Kædmon (680), who in a nightly vision had received the gift of poetry, sang of the fall of the angels and other Biblical subjects, in poems that may be compared with the recently discovered Genesis fragments of the Saxon *Heliand* poet. Kynewulf also, the great Anglo-Saxon poet of the runic verses, of riddles and the like, sang of legends of saints in *Andreas* and *Elene*. King Alfred was a generous patron of native letters, and himself translated into Anglo-Saxon the writings of Orosius, Bede, Boëthius, and Gregory the Great. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that all these works were written in the vernacular, inasmuch as this tended to favor unconsciously, and even contrary to the intention of the author, the retention of many a pagan conception. As we have seen, the same observation applied to the Old Saxon *Heliand*: the language

was involuntarily the vehicle of old ideas. Thus in Kynewulf's *Elene* we frequently find *Wyrd* used of fate, *Wig* of the god of war. The god of the universe is represented as helmsman, the cross is regarded as a hidden treasure, and the nails of the cross as instruments of magic, while hell is depicted with the characteristics of Nastrand, and very vivid scenes are drawn from the seafarers' life.[1]

The chief monument of Anglo-Saxon literature, the epic *Beowulf*, completed, in its present form, presumably not later than the eighth century, has preserved for us a great wealth of sagas. Its contents, however, carry us back to a time antecedent to, or contemporaneous with, the immigration of the Anglo-Saxons in England. The poem relates how the Danish king Hrothgar, of the race of the Scyldings, built a splendid hall, Heorot. A monster, Grendel, carries off from this hall every night thirty of the king's thanes, and no one is able to hinder it, until the great Geat, Beowulf, slays first Grendel and then, in the depths of the sea, Grendel's mother. Laden with gifts Beowulf returns to his native land, where he succeeds Hygelac as king of the Geatas. After a long and glorious reign he undertakes, as an old man, to fight a dragon that guards immense treasures. In his combat with the monster he is joined by the young Wiglaf, the Scylfing, who is not, however, able to save his lord. In the fight Beowulf falls a victim to the venom of the dragon, but he has slain the monster, and has the satisfaction of having with his death purchased the treasure of gold for his people. The poem ends with his solemn obsequies.

It will be apparent from even this brief outline that the epic *Beowulf* consists of two main parts. The first relates the struggle with Grendel and his mother, the second and shorter part the combat with the dragon and the hero's death. The

[1] C. W. Kent, *Teutonic Antiquities in Andreas and Elene* (Dissertation), Leipzig, 1887.

connection between these two parts is rather loose. Numerous other legends have, moreover, been introduced by way of episodes: Beowulf's swimming contest with Breca; the combat with a dragon of Sigemund and his nephew Fitela;[1] tales of the Frisian king Finn; of Offa and Thrydo, in which an Anglo-Saxon hero from the original home has been more or less fused with an historical Mercian king; the story of the Swedish king Ongentheow, and various other personages.

The first question that presents itself is, To what region do these sagas originally belong? It is noticeable at the very outset that the Anglo-Saxons are not even mentioned in the poem, the scene being laid throughout in Scandinavian countries, among Danes and Geatas, the latter of whom we regard not as the Jutes, but as the Götas of Southern Sweden. Accordingly, some scholars are of the opinion that the Anglo-Saxon poem is essentially a translation of a Danish original, or, if not in its present form a translation, that at any rate the legends it contains had been fully developed among the Scandinavians and had already been the subject of song.[2]

Not only do these assertions not admit of proof, but they are in a high degree improbable. The evidence points decidedly in the opposite direction. With Müllenhoff, ten Brink, and Symons, we must regard the *Beowulf* epic as the development given by the Anglo-Saxons themselves to various sagas that they had either brought with them from their original home, or had subsequently appropriated in their unbroken intercourse

[1] For the relation of this legend to other connected legends, compare Uhland, *Schriften*, VIII, pp. 479 ff.

[2] So, in one form or another, Thorkelin, Grundtvig, Jessen, Bugge, Mone, Ettmüller, Sarrazin. Recently E. Sievers has shown that the Danish saga, as transmitted to us in Saxo, has a number of proper names in common with *Beowulf*. See his article, *Beovulf und Saxo* (*Ber. über die Verh. d. königl. sächs. Gesellsch. der Wiss.*, Phil.-Histor. Klasse, Sitzung 6. Juli, 1895). Vigfússon has pointed out a correspondence between *Beowulf* and the Norse Grettir Sagas, but here *Beowulf* is the original from which the Norse author borrowed. Compare H. Gering, *Der Beowulf und die isländische Grettissage* (*Anglia*, III).

with their native land. There is no occasion for surprise at the striking resemblances with Danish sagas in regard to subject-matter, if we reflect that these peoples came constantly in contact with one another, and that this contact before the Viking age was apparently never hostile for any length of time. That these legends should reach their full development on other than their native soil is also not an isolated phenomenon. In a similar manner the East-Gothic sagas lived on principally among the Alemanni; the saga of Hugdietrich and Wolfdietrich was transmitted to posterity through the Franks, and the memory of the downfall of the Burgundians was perpetuated through other peoples. It is in no way strange, therefore, that the Anglo-Saxons, who themselves treated in song the sagas of other peoples (Ermanaric, Walther), brought with them from their native home those of their neighbors. It is indeed noteworthy that the period of the national conflict in England itself lives only in the Keltic saga of king Arthur, and not among the Anglo-Saxons themselves, or at least only in what may be gathered concerning it from disjointed names in the genealogies. But this may in part be attributed to the fact that other characters and other narratives had already seized hold of their imagination.

Müllenhoff's masterly monograph has shown how, by means of keen historical criticism, the epic of *Beowulf* may be made to do service as an important source for the history of the seafaring Teutons. There are reflected in *Beowulf* historical events as well as historical conditions and relations. While the two main episodes that constitute the poem are undoubtedly mythological in origin, and Beowulf is therefore to be classed as a mythical hero, he has been fused with an historical personage, with a warrior from among the following of king Hygelac, or Chochilaicus, as he is called in our Latin sources. This Chochilaicus harried, about the year 515, the Frisian coast up to the mouths of the Rhine, and inland along the banks of this

river, but was defeated and slain by Theodobert, the son of the Franconian king Theodoric.[1] This event is subsequent, therefore, to the first settlement of the Anglo-Saxons on English soil and is contemporaneous with the period of occupation by the swarms of colonists from Sleswick and Holstein that followed the vanguard of their kinsmen. It is evident, accordingly, that the period of saga formation had not come to a close when the Anglo-Saxons arrived in England, and hence in the historic events reflected in *Beowulf* we find both such as are anterior to, and such as are contemporaneous with, the century of the immigration. While the lists of Danish kings contain a number of older names that invite a comparison with the tradition chronicled by Saxo, Hygelac and the historical Beowulf lived in the sixth century. The latter has, however, become fused with an older myth hero.

It does not lie within our province to point out all the details which a critical examination of the narratives and a comparison with other accounts warrant us in regarding, or at least in surmising, as historical in origin. The old Danish sagas are especially rich in this regard, even though the Danes do not play the chief rôle in the poem. But *Beowulf* preserves also the memory of more than one important struggle: of the one between the Geatas and Swedes, resulting in the downfall of the kingdom of the Geatas; of the conflict between the Scandinavian Vikings — not improperly so styled, although antedating by several centuries the so-called Viking period — and the Frisians; of the one between the Danes and the Heathobeards. The last-named tribe, by some identified with the Longobards, by others with the Heruli, inhabited one or more of the islands which are at present Danish, and was annihilated in a feud with the Danes. The memory of this historical event faded to such an extent that in the later forms of the sagas, found in Saxo, the heroes of the Heathobeards, Froda and Ingeld, have been

[1] *Gregorius Turonensis*, III, 3; *Gesta Francorum*, Chapter 19.

classed among the Danish kings. Thanks to *Beowulf* and *Widsith*, the memory of these valiant bards [illegible] seems to be the signification of the names has not been lost. They have there been associated with the reign of the Danish Hrothgar, whom our poem pictures as the ideal king, bold and brave in his youth, in later years wise and good, generous and peace-loving. It was he who built the hall Heorot (Hleidr, near Roskilde), which is a centre of the heroic life of the North in *Beowulf*, and the scene of the devastation wrought by Grendel, as well as of Beowulf's subsequent struggle with the monster.

While all these sagas of kindred peoples have been developed in the Anglo-Saxon epic, it is perhaps impossible to define accurately what belongs to the past of their own tribes, in the narrower sense of the word. Such is doubtless the case, however, with the characters Garmund, Offa, and Eomer, and most likely also with the main features of the myths. The links that serve to connect it with the English period may be detected as readily as the superinduction of Christian conditions. It is evident that these do not form a part of the myths proper. They are probably to be ascribed to the Christian author of the poem.

That nature-myths lie concealed behind the main episodes of *Beowulf* may be regarded as certain, and a plausible interpretation has been found for at least one, and that the most important, of his heroic deeds. We do not refer to the swimming contest with Breca, the forced and divergent explanations of which may be passed by. While it is not improbable that here too a nature-myth lies at the foundation of the story, it is at least possible that it is merely a greatly embellished account of an actual occurrence, or, what is even more likely, the creation of a poet's imagination. Grendel and his mother, on the other hand, are unmistakable water demons. Grendel's regular appearance in the hall Heorot may be compared with the

numerous stories concerning water-sprites that visit mills. The high floods and depths of the sea have accordingly been personified in the savage water monsters of Grendel and his mother. The original home of the myth is along the coast of the North Sea, known of old as fraught with danger to the inhabitants of its shores.[1] That the localization at Heorot-Hleidr on Seeland is not original is evident from the fact that this place is situated inland. The interpretation of the myth as suggested above seems the most obvious one. It may, however, be noted in passing that Laistner has, in a very ingenious way, offered another explanation, which would seem to be supported by some descriptive passages of the poem (*e.g. Beowulf*, XXI). According to this view, Grendel and his mother are the mists that cause so many deadly diseases along the coasts of Jever and Dithmarschen, and Beowulf "Fegewolf" is the wind hero who chases the mists away. Still other interpretations have been proposed, but it does not appear that the character of Grendel and his mother as water giants can be gainsaid.

As to the last great adventure of Beowulf, his fight with the dragon, an interpretation on the basis of a nature-myth is neither more nor less in place than in the case of the dragon fights of Siegfried, Dietrich, Ortnit, and many other heroes. The allegory of the Viking life, which bestows the golden booty on him who braves the sea monster, ingenious as the explanation may seem, is certainly not part of the original conception. These combats with dragons are mythical beyond doubt, but what phenomenon of nature they represent is wholly a matter of conjecture.

An important aspect of the subject that has been neglected by many has with good reason been dwelt upon by Müllenhoff. In the *Beowulf* we are dealing not only with nature-myths, but also with a "culture-myth." The ancient heroes are

[1] "Die Nordsee ist eine Mordsee."

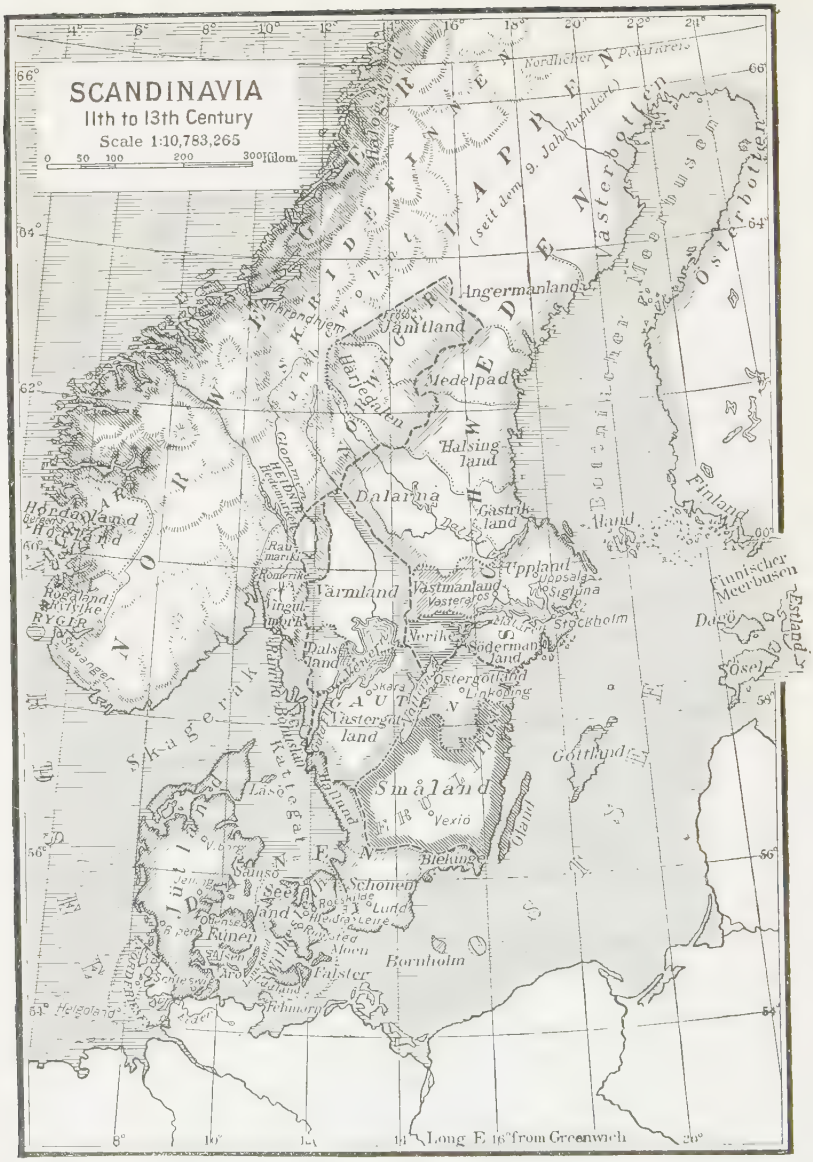
genealogically the ancestors of peoples or kings, and at the same time the beginnings of civilization are ascribed to them. In the series Sceaf, Scyld (the ancestor of the Danish kings), Beaw, we find distributed over three heroes what really belongs to only one. Of Sceaf only the arrival is told, of Scyld the funeral, while of Beaw we have the entire eventful life of the hero. Originally, all this was probably narrated of that one of the three ancestral heroes who belongs to the Anglo-Saxon race. The connection of his ancestry with the Danes has come about through a transference or a commingling of sagas. This progenitor, Scyld Scefing, who as a child landed on the coast in a runderless ship, with weapons and treasures, and sleeping on a sheaf of grain, symbolizes the possessions that are to secure for his people their rank and position: navigation, war, kingly rule, agriculture. Beaw is the personification of the "culture-hero," who slays the sea monsters in order that his people may dwell in safety. It will be seen that a "culture-myth" of this character can be analyzed into its constituent parts more readily than nature-myths.[1]

In this instance the gleanings from the heroic saga for the study of god-myths are extremely meagre. While the identification of Scyld-Sceaf-Beowulf with Ingv-Freyr, as urged by Müllenhoff, is perhaps more plausible than that with any other deity, we must here also resist the temptation of seeking some god or other behind the figure of a hero.

All the more vivid is the picture that the epic *Beowulf* gives us of the life of the ancient seafaring Teutons. While the *Heliand* and the poems of Kynewulf involuntarily preserve various characteristic details of old Teutonic life, *Beowulf* gives us these in a direct way. This life of brute strength in

[1] Compare Müllenhoff, *Beowulf* and *Sceaf und seine Nachkommen*, ZfdA. VII. The identification proposed in the former work of Sceaf with the Longobardian Lamissio (*Paulus Diac.*, I, 15) is ingenious, but in no way convincing. A story of *Skeaf und Skild*, as still told among the people, is the introductory tale of Müllenhoff's *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder aus Schleswig, Holstein und Lauenburg*.

constant struggle with the forces of the sea, this love of gold so all-powerful that even the dying Beowulf still revels at the sight of the treasure he has won, the construction and arrangement of the hall Heorot, and the feasts celebrated there, the obsequies of the hero so circumstantially told, — these and similar features make this, the oldest Teutonic epic poem we possess, of especial importance for the study of Teutonic antiquity, and compensate us for the commonplace character of the episodes and personages themselves. *Beowulf* pictures only the most ordinary heroic deeds, fights with monsters and dragons. There is no trace of any delicate delineation of character. The personages introduced are little more than abstract types : the brave hero, the wise king, the envious courtier, the faithful vassal. Women do not play any considerable rôle, — the queen's character is in no way individualized, — while the majority of the men are extremely voluble, given to boasting, and childishly curious. The wisdom shown by Hrothgar is also of a rather commonplace nature. And yet we read *Beowulf* with unfailing interest. It is the epic of the ancient heroes of the sea, and it furnishes a vivid picture of the crude manners and conditions of life of the Teutons of the sixth century.



From O. Bremer, "Ethnographie der germanischen Stämme," in *Paul's Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*, by courtesy of Karl J. Trübner

CHAPTER IX

THE NORTH BEFORE THE AGE OF THE VIKINGS

"If what Fontenelle has said be true, that history is merely a fable agreed upon by common consent, it is no less true that fable is frequently history misunderstood."[1] In various ways older and recent writers have sinned against the truth expressed in these words. Medieval authors, such as Snorri in the *Ynglinga Saga* (*Heimskringla*) and Saxo in his *Historia Danica*, simply incorporated the saga with history, and even myths, euhemeristically conceived, were made to do service as historical material. Thus Othinus is represented as an ancient king, and Hotherus and Balderus as having actually existed. At present, on the other hand, scholars often lose sight of the historical elements of the sagas: heroes and gods, identified with each other wildly and arbitrarily, are alike relegated to the domain of mythology. In our treatment of German and Anglo-Saxon sagas, we have already emphasized the historical elements that they contain. The same holds good to an even greater extent of the sagas that have been transmitted from the prehistoric age of the Scandinavian peoples, more particularly of the Danes, who are the first to appear upon the stage of history. Frequently interwoven with the Anglo-Saxon legends treated above, as well as combined with those of the other Scandinavian peoples,[2] these sagas contain the very pith of the oldest history of the North. This is gradually becoming more generally recognized, especially since literary criticism

[1] From Michel Servan; Steenstrup uses the passage as a motto for one of the chapters of his *Normannerne*.

[2] Thus among the leading characters of Saxo's *Historia Danica* we meet with the Norwegian Eirikr Malspaki and the Swede Starkad.

has shed light on the sources from which these accounts were drawn, and since the unfruitful arbitrary combination of narratives and characters has made way for a critical examination in accordance with stricter methods.

While none of our sources goes back to a time antedating the Viking period, there yet exists a large group of sagas that were indigenous to the North before Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes through their incursions came into contact with the peoples of Western Europe, and these can be clearly differentiated from the no less numerous legends that originated at a later date, or which the Norsemen borrowed from other nations. To this older group we must first of all direct our attention. We cannot attempt to give an even approximately complete survey of these sagas. We are concerned merely with their general character, and with the light that they throw on religion.

Like the Anglo-Saxon and other Teutonic royal families, so the Norse kings claim a god as their ancestor, usually Odhin or Rig-Heimdallr. Alongside of the Anglo-Saxon genealogies the long lists of Danish kings deserve mention.[1] How much importance was attached to genealogies may be seen, by way of illustration, from an Eddic poem, the *Hyndluljódh*, in which Ottar, the protégé of Freyja, is instructed by the giantess Hyndla regarding the descent of various noble families, among others, of the Skjoldungs, the Danish royal house. Similar enumerations of names continue to a later period to be characteristic of Norse literature. Even the Icelandic sagas usually begin by tracing the lineage of their chief characters as far back as possible, and by inquiring into even the remotest relationships. Similarly the narratives of battles on land or sea frequently consist of little more than the names of the chief combatants.

One of the earliest of the Danish kings that live in the saga

[1] They may be found in Petersen, *Danmarks Historie i Hedenold*, I, 137; II, 5.

is Frodhi of Leire on Seeland. It is not surprising that this saga should represent the Danish kingdom as constituting, from the very outset, a unit under the chief king at Leire, whereas several particulars point to a division under numerous petty sovereigns. This Frodhi was the Prince of Peace, whom the wisdom of a later age, accordingly, made a contemporary of emperor Augustus. Wherever the Norse language is spoken Frodhi-peace is known. In his day no man did another harm, even though he should fall in with the murderer of father or brother. There were no thieves or robbers to be found in the land. One could safely without fear of its being touched let a golden ring lie on the Jellinge-heath (Jutland). This continued until Frodhi purchased from the Swedish king two giantesses, Fenja and Menja by name, who, with large millstones, with the quern Grotti, were to grind for him gold, peace, and happiness. He allowed them no longer respite than the short interval between the cuckoo's cries. A Norse song, intercalated into *Skáldskaparmál* (prose Edda), tells how instead of Frodhi's meal (gold) they ground out for the king calamity and vengeance. When the two giantesses were thereupon taken away by the enemy, they ground salt until the ships sank under the weight, in consequence of which the sea became salty. The mythical conception of a golden age of the past underlies the tale. Its termination is ascribed to the king's greed of gold. It seems somewhat risky, however, to find a parallel to this in the lines of *Völuspa*, where we read that Gullveig, also symbolizing the power of gold, brought about the first war among the gods. This latter conflict between Æsir and Vanir will demand our attention under the head of myths. It is possible that behind it the gods of various Teutonic tribes lie concealed, but it is manifestly impossible to make use of this narrative in an historical survey for the purpose of deducing from it facts that throw light on the history of the ancient Teutonic religion.

None of the old kings is more famous than Hrolf Kraki,[1] the gentle, brave, generous king at Leire, who is said to have ruled about 600, although other legendary accounts place him not far from Frodhi, during whose reign Christ is said to have been born. Of this Hrolf numerous anecdotes are narrated. One of these undertakes to explain the origin of his surname, which was given him, when still young, by a peasant lad named Vǫggr, who was surprised to see before him a thin little man (Kraki) instead of the stalwart figure of a hero. Hrolf was the son whom king Helgi, without being aware of the relationship, had begotten by his own daughter Yrsa, who subsequently wedded the Swedish king Adils. Hrolf won fame in combat with the Saxons, but more particularly in his struggle with the afore-mentioned Swedish king. Adils having failed to give a fitting reward to the twelve Danish Berserkers who had aided him in a fight on the ice of the Væner Lake, Hrolf accordingly went to meet him. Hrolf showed his courage by jumping through the fire, and his sagacity in dividing his enemies and humiliating Adils by the device of strewing gold behind him, which his pursuers stooped to pick up. In Hrolf's last fight, also, in which he was vanquished by the magic arts of his sister Skuld, the Berserkers, chief among them Bǫdhvar Bjarki, fought at his side. The king fell, but was avenged by Vǫggr. This last fight and the fall of Hrolf form the theme of the old *Bjarkamál*, which we are able to reconstruct from scattered verses and the Latin imitation of Saxo.[2] This song was famous in the North and lived in the memories of men. The scald Thormodr still sang it to the army before the battle at Stikklestad (1030), in which St. Olaf fell.

The hero Starkad occupies a unique position in Norse poetry. The original songs have not come down to us, but

[1] Compare *Hrólfssaga Kraka; Snorra Edda* (*Skáldskaparmál*); *Heimskringla* (*Ynglingasaga*, Chapters 33, 34); Saxo, HD. II.

[2] A. Olrik, *Danske Oldkvad i Sakses Historie* (1898).

several Norse sagas[1] mention him with more or less detail, and Saxo gives a circumstantial account of his heroic deeds, and furnishes even a poetic imitation in Latin of epic poems on his life. Müllenhoff's[2] keen analysis has distinguished eight Starkad songs and determined their sequence. These poems differ greatly from one another in tone and spirit. Some narrate in an interesting but dignified manner some adventure or achievement of the hero. Others, such as the lampoon on the king and queen, are vulgar and obscene, though not without an element of humor. While Starkad's home is Upsala, he plays his most important rôle at the Danish court. He is the friend of king Frotho and the foster father of the latter's children, Ingellus and Helga. He guards their honor, in part by arousing king Ingellus from his slothfulness and inciting him to wreak vengeance for the death of his father, in part by warding off disgrace from the person of the princess. It would be idle to seek either history or nature-myths here. The narratives in their present form do not furnish us with a clew to their origin : they represent a fusion of sagas of Swedes, Danes, and Heathobeards. According to *Beowulf*, Ingellus belonged to the latter. Starkad is, however, a representative figure of the North, in the closing centuries of heathenism, the ideal hero, notwithstanding the shadow cast on his character. While Odhin has richly endowed him with noble gifts, Thor has added to these others that neutralize the former, decreeing more particularly that he was to commit three shameful deeds (*nidhingsverk*). On the whole, however, he remains the typical embodiment of heroic courage, fleet-footed, strong, resolute, persevering, continuing the combat even when sorely wounded, full of self-conscious strength, and in no way resembling the raging, barking, howling, foaming Berserkers. Starkad's contempt of all luxury and effeminacy, of excesses in eating or drinking,

[1] *Hervararsaga, Gautrekssaga, Ynglingasaga.*
[2] DA. V, 301 ff.

of every refinement in mode of life, of jugglers and gamblers, is brought out into strong relief. All these he regards as signs of decay: they undermine the hero's manhood.

One of the most important events of this prehistoric period is the *bellum Bravicum*, in which Starkad also plays a rôle, and which has been called the Trojan war of the North. We find it referred to everywhere in Norse literature; Saxo and the Icelandic *Sǫgubrot* furnish a detailed account. Many scholars regard this battle at Bravallir between Harald Hildetand of Denmark and the Swedish king Ring as an historical struggle that took place about 730, shortly before the beginning of the Viking period. Older historians, such as Munch, even furnish numerous particulars as to the historical causes and results of this war. At a later time other scholars recognized only mythological material, and the battle at Bravallir was regarded as another variation of the first mythical war that broke out on earth. Neither the former nor the latter view rests on a sound basis. Better results have been gained through literary criticism. From the accounts that have come down to us, Olrik has attempted to reconstruct the original Norse poem with its staves, and we now possess a list, some one hundred and fifty names, of the heroes who faced one another on this field of battle. At Bravallir representatives of the entire North met in combat, among them Tylenses, although Iceland was not discovered until more than a century after the time when the battle is said to have taken place. The Bravalla song must have been composed in the second half of the eleventh century. Various details suggest reminiscences of the sea battles at Svǫldr (1000) and at Helgea (1027). The elaborate naval preparations, so out of place in the case of a land battle (only the Danes required transport ships), have simply been transferred from these naval encounters. The Norse song points to Telemarken as its place of origin, since archers from this district are introduced to decide the struggle.

Müllenhoff has extolled the Bravalla song as being next to *Völuspa* the grandest poem of the North. According to him, it sounds the funeral knell over the heathen, heroic world. But its significance can scarcely be as broad as all that, as is clearly shown by the speeches that Saxo puts into the mouths of the two kings before the battle begins. Norwegians and Icelanders are found fighting on both sides, although in general it may be said that the united forces of Swedes and Norwegians stand opposed to Danes and a majority of foreign peoples, Saxons and Wends. King Ring emphasizes this fact and refers to the arrogance of the Danes, which must be checked. Harald, on the other hand, entreats his men to remember that the Danes are more accustomed to subjugate than to serve their neighbors. This constitutes the central thought of the poem, and it contains, therefore, an element of historical truth, to this extent at least, that it testifies to the ancient struggle between Danes and Swedes even in the period of the sagas.

While we are, therefore, not able to attach to the Bravalla song the significance of a farewell to the old world, it is yet not wanting in religious conceptions. Aside from the three Skjáldmeyjar (shield-maidens) who fight on the side of the Danes, and of whom one is to succeed Harald after his fall, the rôle played by Odhin is of especial importance. Throughout his long, glorious reign Harald has been the favorite of Odhin, who had taught him the wedge-shaped battle array (*svínfylking*). But now Odhin has fanned the flames of war and, in the guise of the charioteer Brunn, leads Harald on to destruction, in fact hurls the old, blind king to the ground and, since he was invulnerable to steel, slays him with the mace. We must not look upon this act as treacherous ; on the contrary, it is the last and highest favor that the god bestows upon the brave Harald, who as Odhin's favorite is not destined to suffer a disgraceful straw death, but falls gloriously on the

field of battle, surrounded by thousands of brave heroes, and honored with a splendid funeral, which his enemy Ring himself orders.

The old sagas then not merely supply material for the mental gymnastics of myth-comparison, but also yield some results that are of value for the study of the ancient religion. Literary criticism must of course decide what is to be considered old and indigenous, and it has by no means as yet said its last word concerning these intricate problems. Thus we are still at a loss to decide what features of the three Helgi lays are originally Danish and which are Norse. These lays are among the most difficult of the Edda. They tell us of two Helgis, but the prose pieces, which establish an artificial connection between the various fragments of the saga, mention three, whom they represent as one and the same person, twice reborn. Part of this material is no doubt indigenous, but it is equally certain that it has been fused with elements of later origin. Attempts, some of them of recent date, have been made to separate these two elements, but they have not as yet led to certain results.

The mythical material in Saxo, though euhemeristically conceived, and that found in the Norse sagas can be more readily distinguished. Saxo himself, to be sure, frequently fails to recognize it as such. While he understands that it is Odhin who interferes with the natural course of events at Bravallir, he does not elsewhere suspect that the same god appears in various guises and under various names. Odhin is, for example, the one-eyed old man, who taught king Hadding how to array his men in battle; he is now called Yggr (Uggerus), then again Hroptr (Rostarus). Olrik, in distinguishing between the Danish and Norse sources of Saxo, has pointed out that the latter are rich, the former poor, in "supernatural" motifs, such as prophecies, magic, interference of gods with the course of events, Walkyries and Skjáldmeyjar (the latter, not necessarily

to be identified with Walkyries, also occur in the Danish sagas), Berserkers,[1] metamorphosis, and rebirth. While the ideas of later writers may to some extent have colored their accounts of sagas, it is certain that these are not literary products in the usual sense of the term, but contain a nucleus of history from the prehistoric period and reflect ancient manners and customs. That the queen followed her consort in death is shown, for example, by the story of Asmund and Gunnhild at Upsala. These sagas were furthermore current among the people, as is proved by the numerous proper names, and by the fact that formerly, and to some extent even now, the graves of the ancient heroes were pointed out in certain localities.

The Viking expeditions of the second half of the eighth century mark for the Scandinavian North the beginning of the historical period, in which the Norsemen[2] came into contact with the peoples of Western Europe. Ragnar Lodbrok[3] and his sons, who fought in England at the beginning of the ninth century, stand indeed only in the twilight of history. His death song is the *Krákumál*, which he is reported to have sung in the pit filled with snakes, into which the Northumbrian king Ella had ordered him thrown. The poem is, however, of far later date, — about A.D. 1200.

The significance of the Viking expeditions, from the point of view of religion, must not be underrated. Although this encounter between heathen and Christians bears in no way the character of a religious struggle, and while it was certainly not from motives of a religious nature that these seafarers forsook their native land, there can yet be no question that both sides called for aid upon the gods in whom they put their

[1] "A *pièce de résistance* of the Norse saga writers." Compare the sons of Arngrim, of whom such wonderful tales are told (Hervarar Saga).

[2] This was the generic name under which they passed, no matter whether they were actually Danes, Norwegians, or, what was less usual, Swedes.

[3] See concerning him *Ragnarssaga*, various other Norse accounts, and Saxo, HD. IX. The opinions held concerning him by such scholars as Jessen, Storm, and Steenstrup differ widely on numerous matters of detail.

trust. In passing we may remark that these times of great tribulation were not without influence on Christendom. On the one hand, they served to increase the repute of many a saint, whose protection was expected or had been enjoyed; on the other hand, they brought priests and monks into greater prominence, leading them at times even to wield the weapons of war. We are at present, however, concerned with what we learn of the religion of the Vikings themselves, and with such new conceptions as they gathered from the countries with which they came in contact. Regarding the former, we must remember that the Norsemen were primarily in search of booty and glory. When they took captives they at times demanded a renunciation of Christianity, but as a rule they merely levied contributions, or demanded to be directed to hidden treasure. At the same time, they felt themselves to be the warriors of their gods. Thor is frequently mentioned, but the prominence given to any particular divinity was dependent largely on the district from which the group hailed. It also happened, when they were defeated or closely pressed, that a superstitious fear of the powerful god of the Christians seized them, and that they called upon his aid or made a vow to him. But from the nature of the case, little can be ascertained concerning the religion of these pirates and savage warriors. Various accounts indicate that generally a fatalistic frame of mind prevailed among them. They felt that against the inevitable, against what is imposed upon a person, even the strongest struggles were in vain. On the other hand, belief in individual strength was well-nigh unbounded, and many placed greater reliance on their valor than on the gods.

More important is the question as to the influence which the permanent settlements, more especially in Ireland and England, — not the transitory raids and incursions, — exerted upon the Norsemen. In various ways, through marriage, trade, and captives, these Norsemen came in contact with Frankish,

English, and Keltic Christians. This intercourse and the resultant influences extend over many centuries. As early as A.D. 650 we meet on the Shetland Islands with Norsemen from Hǫrdhaland, and, until the last centuries of classical Norse literature, *i.e.* the twelfth and thirteenth, there was an uninterrupted intercourse between Iceland and Ireland, Norway and the British Isles. The extent, nature, and significance of these influences constitute the bone of contention among mythologists of the last decades. Let us first of all pay some attention to the intercourse between Kelts and North Teutons, more especially in Ireland.[1]

In the early Middle Ages Ireland was the seat of the highest civilization in Europe. Mention has already been made of the Irish missionaries, but Irish scholars as well were for several centuries, down into the Carlovingian period, the teachers of sciences that had elsewhere fallen into neglect and been lost. The Keltic mind has nowhere achieved great things in the line of material civilization, but from the fourth century, when they became converts to Christianity, until the tenth, the Kelts of Ireland were noted for their zeal, their enthusiasm, and their imagination, and were leaders in both science and poetry. Several rich saga clusters were developed in Ireland. Other stories (*Mabinogion*) arose in the western part of England, partly, to be sure, based on French models. In Wales, it is said, not a house was to be found in which there was no harp. With these people the Norsemen continually came in contact. Similarly, in the islands to the north of Scotland they fell in with Irish hermits, as also subsequently in Iceland, where these anchorites had preceded the Norsemen. Iceland always maintained close connections with Ireland. At the close of the eighth century, finally, the more permanent settlement of Norsemen in Ireland begins, where they establish petty kingdoms.

[1] For a detailed comparison of the Keltic and Teutonic character and disposition, see Sars, *Udsigt*, I, pp. 161–168.

What influence the two peoples exerted on each other can no longer be stated with any degree of accuracy. We know that in some instances they were united by close family ties, and we meet with a large number of Irish names among the Icelandic families. In the practical affairs of life the Irish were the inferior race, both with regard to politics and the art of war. Hence the Norsemen experienced no difficulty in keeping the people, who were so often the prey of internal dissensions, in subjection. But in the arts and sciences they borrowed largely from the Irish. The metrics of the scalds and of the Irish are related, and the former is most likely dependent upon the latter.[1] The art of prose narration, not developed so strongly elsewhere in the Teutonic world, the Icelanders probably learned from the Irish, who themselves excelled in it. On the other hand, the Irish epics contain elements that have been borrowed from the Teutonic sagas.

The fact that scaldic and Eddic poetry do not antedate the Viking period can no longer be disputed. The oldest scaldic poems of the ninth century are already acquainted with the most important myths.[2] From this it follows with certainty that these myths are not the artificial product of a later age, but not necessarily that they originated in Norway during the first seven centuries of our era, nor that the system and the connection in which we find them are equally original. The centuries during which the Norsemen intermingled with Anglo-Saxons and Irish must have exerted a powerful influence on the form as well as on the content of myths and sagas. Much of the tales told by Scandinavians is not of indigenous growth, but has been borrowed from Franks, Frisians, Saxons, or from the British Isles. We are absolutely certain of this in the case of heroic sagas of the Vǫlsungen-Nibelungen cycle. Similarly,

[1] So according to Edzardi, Hildebrand, Mogk, etc., against Zimmer.

[2] As has been shown by Finnur Jónsson, *Mytiske forestillinger i de ældste skjaldekvad* (AfnF. IX, 1–22).

Christian ideas may have crept in. But that Norse mythology as a whole should have first originated during the Viking period is precluded by the existence of the Old Danish and Norse sagas and by what we know of the oldest scaldic poetry. That the Norsemen should have patched their mythology together as a learned product from Vergil, the Latin mythographers, Christian and Jewish Sibylline books and apocrypha, is a theory that possesses still less inherent probability. In a subsequent chapter we shall examine the character of scaldic and Eddic poetry more closely. At present it will suffice to point out that the Viking period must have given a powerful impetus to the development of myths. This development, accordingly, took place under foreign influences, but on the native soil of Norse myth and saga.

A saga passed by in a previous chapter may appropriately claim our attention here, inasmuch as it has for its background the life of the seafaring Teutons. We refer to the Hilde-Kudrun Saga. Whether we may trace definite historical occurrences in it is extremely doubtful. It is evident, however, that these stories reflect the Viking life in many of its phases : expeditions to strange and distant lands (Ireland and Normandy), the rape of maidens, and savage combats, in which even children in the cradle were not spared.

We do not possess this saga in as many variant forms as those of the Vǫlsungen and Nibelungen. A short narrative in *Skáldskaparmál*, a single Norse saga (*Sǫrla Thátt*r), Saxo's *Historia Danica*, an allusion in Lamprecht's *Alexanderlied* (a German poem of the twelfth century), and the epic of *Kudrun* form the extent of our sources. In the German epic of *Kudrun* three sagas have been united, extending over three successive generations. The story of Hagen forms the prelude ; the Hilde story constitutes the main saga, of which that of Kudrun is an offshoot, modified in a number of particulars and introducing more especially the new motif of the rival lover. This

latter, the so-called Herwig Saga, has received a separate treatment in a parallel Shetland ballad. The milder spirit of medieval German poetry has on every side tempered or suppressed the wild and tragic character of the original saga. In its present form *Kudrun* is a song of fidelity joined with tales of adventure, and interspersed here and there with genre pictures that are among the most attractive in literature.[1] The leading motif of the Hilde Saga, however, we know only from the Snorra Edda.

King Hǫgni pursues Hedhinn, who has captured his daughter Hildr. Overtaking Hedhinn at Haey, one of the Orkneys, Hǫgni will not listen to offers of reconciliation or atonement; he has drawn his sword Dainsleif, forged for him by dwarfs, and demands revenge. They fight the whole day and return at nightfall to their ships. During the night, however, Hildr has, by her magic arts, brought to life again all the heroes that had fallen, and so the fight begins afresh the next day. This combat, the *Hjadhningavíg*, is to continue until the twilight of the gods. While the younger Edda thus localizes the struggle on one of the Orkneys, Saxo places it on the island Hiddensee, near Rügen, and Lamprecht at the mouth of the Scheldt (*Wülpenwerder*). It is self-evident that the entire story is a nature-myth. The combat ever begun anew points to the alternation of day and night. This does not, of course, imply that the characters of the saga are themselves personifications of nature. The Norse saga makes Freyja (*i.e.* Frigg, in this instance) the cause of the conflict. It was she who had to conciliate Odhin after her infidelity in the quest of the precious Brisingamen. Müllenhoff, therefore, regards the *Hjadhningavíg* as merely an historico-epical form of the necklace-myth. But here again the particular details do not lend themselves to an exact mythical interpretation, even though it be admitted

[1] The merchandise offered for sale near the ships of the Hegelingen; the singing of Horant; the princesses washing clothes on the seashore.

that the struggle bears a mythical character. The character of Wate, the impetuous and raging giant,[1] is likewise mythical.

Thus the heroic saga of the seafaring Teutons, both in *Beowulf* and *Hilde-Kudrun*, is parallel with that of the nations of the migration period. In both we encounter the mythical struggle between light and darkness, or against the wild powers of nature. Owing to their historical character the German heroic legends depict to a greater extent actual personages and events, whereas the Hilde-Kudrun Saga sketches the more general historical conditions of the Viking period.

It still remains to cast a glance at the first missionary work among the Scandinavian peoples, and at what we learn of paganism in connection with it. Fortunately the historians, more especially Adam of Bremen, and also Rimbert in his life of Anskar, are less chary in their statements concerning heathen conditions than is Bede in the case of the Anglo-Saxons. Adam wrote a history of the diocese Hamburg-Bremen, which from the very beginning formed the centre of the mission work in the North. In the course of this work he furnishes considerable information concerning Saxons, Slavs, and Scandinavians, as *e.g.* his circumstantial account of the temple at Upsala, the images of the three chief gods (Thor, Odhin, and Freyr), the human sacrifices, and the festival recurring at intervals of nine years (IV, 26, 27). And yet it cannot be claimed that either of these writers gives us a clear idea of the course of events. In the life of Anskar the author is chiefly concerned in drawing a picture of the missionary, admittedly one of the grandest and most attractive pictures in the history of missions. As a rule, we fail to grasp the connection and the significance of the events narrated, no light being shed on

[1] He has been variously regarded as an "Odhinsheros," a water giant, and a storm demon. Müllenhoff (ZfdA. VI), Weinhold (ZfdA. VII), and Symons (*G. Hds.*, § 60) regard him as a sea giant, W. Sauer (*Mahabharata und Wate*) and E. H. Meyer (*G.M.*, § 385), as wind giant.

their relation to general political conditions. The narrative lays great stress on the conversions brought about by miracles, and yet repeatedly leaves us face to face with the inexplicable fact that paganism remained dominant notwithstanding.

Since the year 823 the attention of Lewis the Pious had been drawn to Denmark. Archbishop Ebbo, of Rheims, even proceeded thither and baptized several converts, but a stay extending over only a few months could produce no lasting results. The prospect for missions appeared to be brighter when a Danish prince, driven away by his kinsmen, turned to Lewis for aid. With great pomp this Harald, with his family and retinue, was baptized at Mainz in 826. A young monk, Anskar, was designated by Lewis to accompany Harald back to his own land, and he proved to be the right man for pioneer work. While Harald protected the religion of his adoption, he was at first only a half-hearted convert, and the labors of Anskar had as yet borne little fruit, when Harald after a few years was again driven away and was indemnified by Lewis with a grant of land along the Frisian coast. Meanwhile a new field had been opened in Sweden. Anskar was well received there, the king being favorably disposed towards him, and after God had shown his might by signs and miracles at Birka, many asked to be baptized.

Apart from the fact that the German mission of Hamburg-Bremen was not developed systematically and vigorously, remaining at a standstill for years at a time, the outward circumstances were not favorable to it. First of all, the points of contact between Danes and Germans were very few. The entire Baltic coast was Slavic and heathen territory; the Frisian coast, forming the boundary of German rule, was poor; Hamburg alone was a welcome prey to the Vikings, who accordingly plundered it as early as 845. Besides, the Danes, who during these centuries were the paramount power of Northern Europe, harrying England and France, and occupying

large districts and establishing kingdoms, were naturally not inclined to renounce their customs and religion on account of the preaching of a few German missionaries, even though now and then a brilliant miracle, such as the carrying of red-hot iron, appealed to their imaginations. We need not, accordingly, assume a powerful organization or a strong conviction and zeal for the heathen faith, to account for the fact that the Danes, like the Frisians and Saxons a century previous, turned a deaf ear to the strange religion.

It is clear, therefore, why Christianity in Denmark made no material progress during a century and a half and did not, in fact, produce any spiritual stir. During the second half of the tenth century it began to penetrate, but not from Germany. Several Viking princes and a number of their men had been baptized in France or England. Among these were Guthorm in 878, in East Anglia, and Rollo in 912, in Normandy. In Denmark proper, Gorm the elder had maintained paganism with a strong hand and had tolerated the Christians only under compulsion. His son, Harald Blåtand (941–986), was the first Christian king. When his successors, Sven and afterwards Knut, joined the crown of England to that of Denmark, this did not, of course, take place without a definite change from the heathen to the Christian religion. The same change occurred nearly simultaneously in other Scandinavian countries. In Sweden Olaf Skautkonungr (1008) was the first Christian king. Concerning the other two Scandinavian countries, Norway and Iceland, we possess more detailed accounts, which will demand a separate treatment.

CHAPTER X

NORWAY AND ICELAND: HISTORY AND LITERATURE

"In Denmark and Sweden the religious struggles did not involve also a struggle between conflicting political interests, or, at any rate, they could not develop into such to the same degree as in Norway."[1] With these words Sars describes the character of the history of Norway in the tenth century. It may be maintained that here too the heathen belief had not struck root firmly and deeply enough to offer serious resistance, but it is true, on the other hand, that "the warlike character of the Norwegians, their attachment to what had been handed down from their forefathers, kept them faithful to their old gods, under whose protection they had until now prospered."[2] While we may attach some weight to the fact that for the Norwegians, likewise, Christianity was the religion of strangers, which they were therefore loth to accept, yet the characteristic difference between the period of conversion of the Norwegians, as compared with that of Danes, Swedes, Frisians, and Saxons, is undoubtedly the close connection to be observed between the political and the religious movement. The aristocracy of the noble families remained attached to paganism, whereas the royal power, whose authority over the whole land was of only recent date, soon sought to strengthen its position by an alliance with the cause of Christianity.

The sources dealing with this period, while not wholly contemporaneous with the events they narrate, are yet very full. The oldest, — and these are in part contemporaneous with their

[1] Sars, *Udsigt*, I, 216.
[2] J. Grimm, *Kl. Schr.*, V, 92.

subject-matter, — are the scaldic songs that have come down to us intercalated in the Snorra Edda and in numerous historical sagas. The songs of the Edda also come in for consideration, and the historical sketch to which we now proceed is based on the results of the critical study devoted to the chronology and sequence of these documents. We shall be able to sketch only the main outlines, without entering upon the discussion of various matters of detail. Not only are we acquainted with a large number of proper names belonging to this century, but the individuals that bear them play a rôle in numerous anecdotes. The historical sagas are preëminently stories; history is tantamount to the adventures and encounters of king, jarl, hersir (ruler of a district), bóndi (free peasant), of viking and scald. Our task, then, will be to describe the heathenism of the century in which Christianity gradually penetrated Norway in the light that these accounts cast on it. Iceland, too, falls within our domain.

We know the religious conditions in Norway before the end of the ninth century through proper names only, which point chiefly to the worship of Thor. We must not, however, conclude from this that no other gods were worshipped. When we find, for example, the historical sagas making mention of a libation to Odhin or to Freyr as a usual occurrence, we must certainly regard this as an ancient religious observance. The religious element is not, however, made very prominent, even in the case of the first king on whom the light of history falls, Harald Fairhair (*Hárfagri*), who, about the year 872, brought the whole of Norway under his rule, breaking the power of the independent jarls and hersirs, and with a strong hand subjugating the Western Vikings. The great historical significance of his reign lies, on the one side, in the unification of Norway under one supreme king; on the other, in the greatly increased emigration, brought about in part by these internal conditions. In this manner, the islands to the west

were settled: the Orkneys, the Shetland Islands, where from now on we find Norse jarls in constant communication with the mother country, and Iceland, which was also occupied by Norse emigrants during the reign of Harald. These early accounts yield, however, but little that has a bearing on religion. It does not appear that the Norsemen had brought back with them from their Viking raids, which had now lasted more than a century, impressions concerning Christianity. In Snorri's saga of Harald Fairhair (in *Heimskringla*) we read, in this connection, only of the king's opposition to Finnish witchcraft, and, on the other hand, of his passionate love for a fair Finnish maiden, named Snæfrid, who was one of his many wives. The *Hrafnsmál* (raven-song)[1] of Thorbjǫrn Hornklofi, one of the oldest scaldic poems, which makes a comparatively scant use of the technical terms of a later age, sings the fame of this king, his roaring Berserkers, his fool, and his pet dog. Freyr and the Yule festival are also mentioned.

It was Harald's desire that of his numerous sons, Eirikr should succeed him as chief ruler. Eirikr was not, however, able to maintain himself permanently, and his brother Hakon gained control of the kingdom, although he subsequently lost it to the sons of Eirikr. During these troublous times, covering a large part of the tenth century, Christianity gradually crept in from foreign lands, more especially from the British Isles, where many Norse Vikings and princes had been baptized. This had also been the case with the above-mentioned Hakon, one of the younger sons of Harald Fairhair. He had come to England when a child, and, according to a custom of the time, had been "laid on the knee" of the Anglo-Saxon king Æthelstan, who thus became his foster father and brought him up in the Christian faith. When Hakon returned to Norway he gained the support of Sigurd, the powerful jarl of Throndhjem,

[1] This poem is in the form of a dialogue between a raven and a girl who resembles a wise Walkyrie or a Finn, versed in the language of birds.

of whom he had of old been a favorite, Sigurd himself having sprinkled him with water at the name-giving. Eirikr, who was brave, but ungracious and unbeloved, had to flee, and Hakon, surnamed the Good, or else Adhalsteinsfóstri, ruled the land, but in dependence on the nobles, to whom he owed his elevation to the throne. This became apparent when in the popular assemblies (*thing*) he wished to compel the bóndis and hersirs to accept the Christian religion. This caused great dissatisfaction and might well have cost him his throne, if jarl Sigurd had not intervened as peacemaker. The jarls and hersirs would not abandon their old customs. They were doubtless partly influenced by a superstitious fear of the wrath of the gods they were asked to renounce, but a stronger factor was the inborn pride, which would not suffer to have anything thrust upon it by force, least of all when it came from a king whom they themselves had raised to the throne, and when it concerned the service of the gods who had local centres of worship (*fylki*) in every part of the realm. The sources introduce us to the solemn ceremonies, on the occasion of a festive meal, at which Hakon refuses to partake of the sacrificial flesh, and makes the sign of the cross over his cup, though subsequently yielding to popular customs by eating a bit of horseflesh and pledging a cup to Thor. While Hakon's personality still remained far more popular than that of the ungracious Eirikr, the discontent on both sides would doubtless have led to a conflict, if Hakon had not been compelled to face the sons of Eirikr. He falls in battle (961), so that, despite his good intentions, Christianity made little progress during this reign.

Meanwhile king Eirikr roamed in the West as Viking, and finally acquired a kingdom in Northumbria. There he and his family, including his wife Gunnhild, were baptized. This Gunnhild is painted in the darkest colors, as a vengeful, faithless princess, an adept in Finnish sorceries. It is worthy

of note that a funeral poem (*Eiriksmál*) was composed on this Christian king Eirikr, in which the scene of his reception in Walhalla by Odhin and the *Einherjar* is described. While this has been taken to prove that the Christianity of Eirikr and Gunnhild was not of the best sort, it is still more significant that in *Hákonarmál*, an imitation of the beautiful *Eiriksmál*, Eyvindr Skaldaspillir, the faithful friend and scald of king Hakon, praises this king, at variance with all historic truth, as a devoted follower of the heathen gods.

The sons of Eirikr, among whom Harald Grafeldr was the most prominent, accordingly came to Norway as Christians. They gave evidence of their faith by destroying many a heathen sanctuary, but they did not otherwise resort to force in winning over the heathen population to Christianity. Their short reign was characterized by all manner of calamities, failure of crops and ill luck in fishing, all of which the people attributed to the wrath of the gods. They had, moreover, made many enemies, especially by their murder of jarl Sigurd. When, therefore, the latter's son, with Danish aid, and as vassal of the Danish king, took possession of the land, the period of reaction set in, both against the kingship in the house of Harald Fairhair and against Christianity.

For nearly twenty years (976–995) Hakon the son of Sigurd ruled the land. He did not bear the title of king, but is known in history as Hakon Jarl, or as *blótjarl* (sacrifice-jarl). His various achievements, how he avenged his father, won fame in battle, established peace, and restored the worship of the gods, may be read in the poem *Vellekla* of his scald Einar. It must be acknowledged that at first the land flourished under his rule and that he was a sincere and devoted worshipper of the gods. The time of jarl rule and of the ancient religion was, however, a thing of the past.

In the person of Olaf, son of Tryggvi, a king in Southern Norway, who had played an important rôle in the disturbances

of the tenth century, there arose a man who was destined to complete the work of his forbear, Harald Fairhair, to establish the rule of a supreme king in Norway, and to bring about the triumph of Christianity, which he had adopted as Viking in the West. That he succeeded in this during his short five years' reign, considering that he found but few traces of Christianity upon his arrival in the heathen land, is one of those historical enigmas which are inexplicable, unless one takes into account the power and magic charm, the authority and veneration that are the attributes of a wholly unique personality. It is evident, from all accounts, that Olaf Tryggvason was a man of this stamp. The later legend, in which monastic historians give an account of his life, recounts a number of cruel deeds, which he is said to have perpetrated in putting refractory heathen to death, or in forcing them to accept Christianity. But while the older and better sources make mention of the severity of the king in connection with a number of incidents that occurred on his proselyting tours, they speak at least as frequently of his bountiful gifts and the magnanimity through which he had won over to his side his scald Hallfred and the Icelander Kjartan. In reading, in the *Heimskringla*, the saga that bears his name, we gain the impression that the personal appearance of the king at the various *things* created a stronger impression and exerted a greater influence than mere physical force, although the latter was also not wanting. That the paganism, thus formally forsworn, now and then still haunted the memory of the king himself may be gathered from a story told in this very saga, which later on became the basis of *Nornagests Tháttr*. Odhin, in the guise of an old man with one eye, is said to have sat down one evening to the festive meal, and until late at night to have greatly preoccupied the thoughts of the king. Not until the next morning did they discover that they had been tricked by Odhin, who had spoiled the meats and confused their thoughts.

Everything points to the fact that the king, who had in so short a time Christianized his realm, cherished great plans. The establishment of the Christian religion in the Orkneys, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and even Greenland proceeded from him. The Swedish queen dowager refused to wed Olaf, because she would not adopt the new religion. She thereupon became the wife of the Danish king Sven. Just as Hakon Jarl had only with difficulty shaken off the supremacy of the Danes, and defeated their allies, the Jomsburg Vikings, in Wendland, so king Olaf came into conflict with the same power, in those days the strongest in Northern Europe. Perhaps he dreamt of a great Christian empire, which should bring the Baltic under the Norse sceptre. However this may be, in the year 1000 (or 999, according to others), he saw himself arrayed on his gigantic ship, "the long serpent," against the united power of the entire North: Swedes, Danes, and Joms Vikings. In this naval battle of Svǫldr, one of the most famous in Norse annals, king Olaf fell. The people would not, however, believe him dead, any more than in the case of so many representative men in history. The saga therefore makes the great king escape from his ship and wander to Rome and Jerusalem. Norse travellers are said to have met him in the South many years afterwards.

Norway was divided between the victors, and under Danish supremacy ruled by the jarls of the Jomsburg. They, also, were Christians, so that the work of Olaf was not again undone, although there naturally still remained numerous survivals of paganism in a country that had only just been converted, and that too very superficially. This state of affairs continued some fifteen years, when another descendant of Harald Fairhair, a namesake of the great Olaf, and like the latter a daring Viking, arose to free his fatherland. Under this Olaf Haraldsson, the holy Olaf, as he is called, the Christian religion and dynastic central rule were permanently established.

We must now cast a glance at Iceland, the other great centre of Norse culture. The first settlers on the island were Irish hermits, called *papar* by the Norsemen, who left behind them books, bells, and crosiers. They vanished when, after the year 870, the so-called *landnám* (land-taking) began, the occupation of the country by those whom the political conditions under Harald Fairhair had driven from Norway. They numbered some four hundred nobles, coming on their own ships, and accompanied by their families and retinue. The population that settled in Iceland during the half century over which the occupation extended may be estimated at about twenty-five thousand.

To this island these Norwegians accordingly brought from their fatherland their ancient institutions and customs. It was in order to preserve these that they left Norway, which had become a new realm under the rule of the great Harald. On their ships they carried the pillars of the high-seat in their hall, with the image of Thor carved on it. As they neared land, they entrusted these to the sea, and where the wind and waves cast them ashore there they built their new home. In this way they continued to serve the old gods in the new land, at times even on Norwegian soil, of which they had taken a small load with them on board of ship. Many particulars, however, of the religion of these heathen Icelanders escape us. They served their ancestral gods, Thor, Freyr, and Odhin. Their belief in various omens, apparitions, and dreams seems to have been strongly developed. Catching sight of the tutelar genius (*fylgja*) or the family spirit portended misfortune and death, and might also become of significance for affairs of state.

Notwithstanding the peaceful conditions which this isolation from the world at large seemed to bring to these Norwegians in Iceland, their warlike spirit did not fail to assert itself. The history of the island is that of the feuds between

families and individuals, — bloody feuds, that were at times, to be sure, adjusted in a judicial way. Nowhere does the history of a state coincide with that of individual persons more nearly than in Iceland. We are not here concerned with characterizing the political institutions or the administration of justice, as established by the constitution of Ulfljot (928). It should, however, be noted how closely these two were connected with religion. The godhi, the successor of the Norwegian hersir, united in his person the offices of magistrate, judge, and priest. He was the proprietor of the plainly furnished temple and offered up the sacrifices. The executive, judicial, and legislative powers, so far as his limited jurisdiction extended, all rested in him. The great assembly, the *Althing*, presided over by the law-speaker, decided matters of general interest as well as feuds involving individuals from different districts.

Such was the state of affairs at the time when the Republic attained its greatest prosperity, the classical age, in which the scenes of the chief and best sagas are laid. These are often written in a fascinating style, are characterized by great accuracy, and introduce us to a number of individuals representative of this period. The Eyrbyggja, Laxdæla, Gunnlaugs, Egils, Fostbrœdhra, and Njals Sagas, to enumerate only the most important ones, all transport us to the century extending from 930 to 1030, and more especially to its last half. Among these the Njala, both in respect to form and content, can certainly lay claim to the first rank. They are all histories of Icelandic families, for a long time transmitted orally, and reduced to writing in the literary period, *i.e.* in the thirteenth century. They tell us of the genealogies, the adventures, the feuds, and lawsuits of the Icelanders of those days.

On their journeys undertaken for purposes of trade or in order to come into touch with the outside world, — Viking expeditions proper were not sent forth from Iceland, — many

Icelanders during the tenth century became acquainted with Christianity in England and Ireland, and a few were baptized. One of these latter, Thorwald Kodransson, the travelled (*vídhförli*), even brought back with him a foreign bishop, and, since 981, this Thorwald and Friedrich, the bishop, preached in Iceland, encountering some opposition, and without achieving signal success. The Thorwald Saga relates how several miracles were wrought; how the family spirit (or diviner, *spámadhr*) of Kodran dwelt in a stone and was exorcised by the bishop, who poured water over the stone; how some Berserkers were consumed by the fire over which they attempted to leap, and similar things. At any rate, the question of religion did not become a burning one until the proselyting zeal of Olaf Tryggvason began to extend also to Iceland. The German preacher whom he sent thither, Thangbrand, a dissolute and brutal fellow, guilty more than once of manslaughter, doubtless did the cause of Christianity more harm than good. But here as elsewhere the attachment to the ancestral religion did not prove to be very firmly rooted, even though there was no inclination instantly to relinquish the old in favor of the new. In the great sagas that carry us back to those days, the introduction of Christianity does not occupy the most prominent place among the events of the period. The change from paganism to Christianity was effected at the *Althing* of the year 1000, but only after a violent conflict and a permanent rupture had been narrowly averted. Both sides, the old and the new, had vehement advocates, who were anxious to have recourse to arms. A volcanic eruption was interpreted as a sign of the displeasure of the old gods. The advice of the more thoughtful people, among whom were the law-speaker Thorgeir and the godhi Snorri, the most learned Icelander of the time, finally decided the issue. They saw the danger involved in the complete severance of family ties and abrogation of legal forms through internal dissension. They recognized that

Christianity, in Norway under Olaf as well as elsewhere, was the coming world power, against which eventually no effectual resistance could be made. Accordingly, in the assembly the announcement was made from the *lögberg* (law-hill) that all should be baptized and that the Christian religion should be the dominant one in the island. Certain concessions were made to such heathens as were not willing to relinquish forthwith all their customs. They were permitted to offer sacrifices in secret, provided no witnesses were present whose testimony could render them amenable to law. They were besides allowed to put out their children as foundlings, and to eat horseflesh. It was only as Christian morals and ecclesiastical discipline gained wider influence that these remnants of heathenism gradually disappeared.

We have thus attempted to sketch in a rough way the historical setting of Norse literature. In calling the latter a heathen literature, more than one reservation must be made. Everything that has come down from the tenth century, as well as the little that bears a still earlier date, while heathen in origin, yet belongs to a period in which contact with Christian countries was manifold and increasing in influence. After the year 1000 Christianity is established, but the old paganism lives on in various ways in literature. We must therefore examine these literary products somewhat more closely to determine their position in the history of religion.

In the ancient prehistoric period we see the vague outlines of the *thulir*, versed in runes, songs, and proverbs, who, from their seat (*thularstóll*) in the hall of princes or elsewhere, recited oracles or songs for the gratification of the company. Such a *thulr* was Loddfafnir, whose sayings constitute one of the parts of *Hávamál*. The *thulir* are mentioned only three times in the songs of the Edda. As early as the time of Harald Fairhair they had been superseded by the scalds, who followed poetry as a profession, and made it subject to fixed rules.

On the scalds history sheds abundant light. They lived at the courts of the kings, whose deeds of prowess they sung, and from whom they received in return rich gifts and marks of honor. The craving for gold and fame, which had seized hold of the men of those days, is reflected also in their lives. The kings took care that the scalds should witness the battle, and demanded that a brilliant song of praise should proclaim their glory, showing dissatisfaction in case they received only a short *flokkr*, where they had expected an elaborate *drápa*, with the accompaniment of the harp. Nor were kings the only ones who rewarded the scald that had sung their praises. We read how the famous Eyvindr Skaldaspillir composed a *drápa* on all the inhabitants of Iceland, and how he was rewarded by a magnificent gift in silver, to which all had contributed. Disconnected occasional poems, half improvised, and single verses or couplets (*lausavísur*) are also found. From the numerous lampoons on opponents (*nídhvísur*), as well as from the love poems, it is evident that the scald did not lose sight in his compositions of his personal circumstances. The well-known scald, Thormodhr, who took part in the battle of Stikklestad, even bears the surname Kolbrunarskald, after the maiden whom he loved and celebrated in song. Many of these poems have been preserved to us in the later historical sagas, although a considerable part of the poetry introduced in these is of a more recent date.

A large number of scalds, in all four hundred, are known to us by name, and of many of these we possess a good bit of biography, thus giving us a vivid picture both of their own persons and fortunes, and of the conditions prevailing in Norway, Iceland, the Orkneys, and the other groups of islands, during the three centuries extending from 900 to 1200. The list of scalds (*Skáldatal*) begins with names with which we are already familiar from the old saga period: Starkad, Ragnar Lodbrok, and his wife, Aslaug. Then follows Bragi the Old, concerning

whose existence or non-existence there has been much controversy. He is not to be confused with Bragi, the god of poetry, who is entirely a creation of mythology. Notwithstanding the agreement in name, we regard Bragi, in common with most scholars, as an historical personage, who lived in the early part of the ninth century, and of whose *Ragnarsdrápa* we still possess fragments. It belongs to a class of songs for which ancient Greek poetry furnishes a remarkable parallel. We are referring to descriptions of scenes represented on shields, with which the description of the shield in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad* and the poem, *The Shield of Herakles*, attributed to Hesiod, are to be compared. There are still other examples of this in Norse literature, and we also include in this category the description of scenes depicted on the walls and ceilings of an Icelandic hall.[1] These descriptions are important sources for the study of myths as well as of pictorial art.

It is impossible to enumerate here even the more important scalds, let alone give a sketch of their careers. The oldest of them are from Norway, such as Thorbjǫrn Hornklofi, whose *Hrafnsmál* on Harald Fairhair was mentioned above, and Thjodholf of Hvin, whose *Ynglingatal* traces the lineage of a Norwegian king back through thirty generations to Freyr. Presently Iceland produced the most famous scalds. Even at the court of the Norwegian kings we soon find that the majority of the court scalds are Icelanders. Among them there is one family, that of the Myramen, subsequently known as the Sturlungs, which is especially prominent from the beginning of the settlement until the last years of the Republic. Its first representative was Skallagrim, who was one of the immigrants. The great mythographer and historian, Snorri, belonged to the same family, so that the traditions of the first scald were preserved until the last days of Iceland's independence. Skallagrim's son, Egil (904–990), whose life was full of stirring

[1] The *Húsdrápa* of Ulfr Uggason, from the end of the tenth century.

adventure, is a type of the Icelandic scald. He also fought in England, and there fell into the hands of his bitter enemy, Eric Bloody-Axe. Among the verses that have been preserved of him is also the song that he composed in one night as "a ransom for his head."[1] Of the other bards in the tenth century who played a rôle in Norway, Glum Geirason, the favorite of Harald Grafeldr, and Einar Skalaglam, under Hakon Jarl, were Icelanders. Eyvindr, whom we have already met, belonged to a distinguished Norwegian family.

When the change to Christianity was made, there were some scalds who adhered to the old religion. So, for example, Vetrlidhi of Iceland, who even composed satirical songs on the new belief and was slain by the violent preacher, Thangbrand. At the Norwegian court the scalds soon conformed to the wishes of the Christian king, although tradition tells us that Olaf Tryggvason only prevailed with difficulty upon the poet Hallfred to accept the new belief. The latter, for this very reason, was called Vandrædhaskald, the "troublesome" poet, but he remained faithful to his king and is one of the great figures among the scalds, in every sense a noble and brave man. Equally great was the fame of the scalds of the holy Olaf, Sigvat Thordharson and Thormodhr. The former was at the same time the confidant, ambassador, and as it were prime minister of the king. Under king Magnus, too, — a name he himself had bestowed upon the king, after Carolus Magnus, — he still remained the king's counsellor, and even ventured in some plain-spoken verses (*Bersöglisvísur*) to caution him against dealing too harshly with his people, lest it might endanger his throne. As poet, too, this Sigvat occupies a place of honor among the scalds.

[1] There is an extensive literature on the *Egilssaga*, of which we may here mention the following: the edition of Finnur Jónsson in *Altn. Sagab.*, III (1894); E. Jessen, *v. Sybel's Histor. Zs.*, XXVIII (1872; a fierce attack on the trustworthiness of the saga); K. Maurer, SMA. (1895); G. A. Gjessing, AfnF. II (1885).

Still others might be mentioned, but it is not necessary to continue this enumeration. While it is doubtless important that we should learn to know more about the scalds, their travels and adventures, their love affairs and feuds, all this is of little moment so far as our knowledge of Teutonic religion is concerned. We must, however, examine somewhat more closely the character and the mythological content of their work.

Their poetry is preëminently artificial, both as regards metrics and diction. The writing of poetry, according to the terms that Norsemen themselves apply to it, is building with staves and beams, a mechanical accomplishment, that requires for its mastery prolonged study, and is handed down to others. In no sense is it the free development of individual gifts. Scaldic poetry is therefore not a product of a healthy imagination, its pictures are not clearly outlined, it is not based on a poetic conception of life. It is, on the contrary, rather the product of the clever and ingenious mind, and as such propounds riddles to the sober understanding. This is shown most clearly in its paraphrases, the so-called *kenningar*. These *kenningar* by no means resemble the standing epithets in Homer. They are metaphorical paraphrases that indicate an object more or less vaguely, and allow us, in fact, to guess at it. Several hundred such *kenningar* are known to us from Norse poetry, explained in part in *Skáldskaparmál*, in part in glossaries, the so-called *Thulur*, of rather late origin.[1]

There are various sorts of *kenningar*. The house in which a fire is burning on the hearth is called a fire-ship, the sky the path of the eagles, the wind the wolf of the forest, the gallows Odhin's steed, the head the sword of Heimdallr. The relation

[1] A list of the *kenningar* is given in CPB. II, 447–486. For a detailed treatment of scaldic poetry, see Finnur Jónsson's *Lit. Hist.* and Weinhold, *Altnord. Leben*, pp. 327–350. On the *Thulur*, see CPB. II, 422 ff.; S. Bugge, *Aarb. f. nord. Oldk.* (1875), pp. 209–246; Müllenhoff, DA. V, 129, 201, 223 ff.; Finnur Jónsson, II, 171–181. Views as to the origin of the *Thulur* differ: Finnur Jónsson seeks it in Iceland, most of the others in the Orkneys.

between these circumlocutions and the things they signify is at times transparent: sometimes it is explained by a myth that is known to us, but frequently such is not the case. As to the origin of this wholly artificial phraseology, no certainty can be attained, and we are entirely dependent upon conjecture. Bugge attributes it to the influence that Ireland exerted upon the Norsemen, and this possibility can certainly not be totally ignored. In any case, this artificial poetry did not arise until the Norsemen and Kelts came into close contact during the Viking period. It is significant that these *kenningar* are practically lacking in the Old Danish ballad, whereas they are also found in Anglo-Saxon poetry, although to a far less extent. The Norsemen borrowed the art without any real poetic feeling, and developed it in a sober, matter-of-fact way, giving full play to their love for riddles and enigmas. This predilection for riddles is shown by several poems and stories, among others by the well-known riddles of king Heidhrek in the Hervarar Saga.

Another factor should perhaps be taken into account in a discussion of this intentional paraphrasing of the expression of one's thought. Attention has recently been called to the special nautical language, which, like that found in various parts of the Malay Archipelago, was at one time, and to some extent is still, used in the Shetland and Faroe Islands and even along the Norwegian coast. Through fear of the spirits (the *huldre*) certain words are preferably avoided or paraphrased on the high sea. This religious usage is doubtless older, and has struck deeper roots in the minds of the people, than the artificial poetical language of the scalds. In how far the latter is connected with this nautical language, or has borrowed from it, is difficult to determine.[1]

If this oldest scaldic poetry is the fruit of intercourse with more highly cultured and already Christianized peoples, then, as

[1] J. Jakobsen, *Det norröne sprog på Shetland* (Kopenhagen, 1897).

its form so its content cannot without further proof be regarded as original and purely Norse. Neither pictorial representations, such as described in the shield-songs or in the *Húsdrápa*, which sings the praises of a hall belonging to an Icelander whose mother was an Irish woman, nor the oldest *kenningar* furnish mythological material that is above suspicion. While Finnur Jónsson finds in these oldest *kenningar* the proof of the genuineness of Norse mythology in its main outlines, he has yet distinguished them very carefully from those found in later poets, to which he denies all cogency whatsoever. When we proceed to examine the content of these oldest conceptions or poetic metaphors, we encounter many features whose origin we may readily trace to Norway, such as the adventures of Thor, for example, but there is also a considerable amount of material which has certainly not originated in Norway. As examples of the latter, the story of Hildr and Hǫgni, and an episode from the history of Jǫrmunrek in Bragi's shield-song, may be cited, both of which have probably made their way to the North from Germany.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, this does not imply that with Bugge and his school we regard the mythology of the Edda and the scalds as the result of the artificial imitation of classical, Jewish, or Christian models. Such an origin is too inherently improbable to be assumed without strong evidence being adduced in its favor, evidence which in this instance is entirely wanting. The Danish sagas show that the Norsemen possessed a large body of myths and legends of their own. Everything, accordingly, argues in favor of the assumption that they developed this native material, although it was frequently amalgamated with, or augmented by, other matter gathered in the West or in Germany. In the case of this latter, the Teutonic motifs and stories were unquestionably greater in both extent and importance than those of classical and Christian origin. Norse literature borrowed Sigurd, Atli, and Jormunrek

from kindred nations, but there is nothing to show that it appropriated an Achilles or a Sibyl. We need, therefore, not hesitate to call Norse mythology a Teutonic mythology, even though we do not possess a test by means of which to determine in the case of each individual episode or narrative what is originally Norse and what was borrowed by the scalds during the age of the Vikings. We must, furthermore, not lose sight of the fact that the points of agreement between this Norse pantheon and the meagre material transmitted from German sources possess great weight. That the importance of these parallels was at one time overrated is no reason why we should undervalue them now.

One fact deserves especial mention on account of its bearing on mythology. The scalds developed the myths and sagas as poetic motifs, without regard to their religious significance. Gods are higher beings, in whom people believe and whom they worship, but the poetry of the scalds barely shows a trace of belief and cult. The gods came to be regarded more and more in the light of characters of whom numerous stories were narrated, after a time as mere poetical metaphors. While through this veil we are still able to recognize many a genuine myth of Odhin and Walhalla, of Hildr and Hǫgni, to mention two of a totally different character, the accounts of the doings of Thor have to a large extent become *Märchen*.

The songs of the Edda trace their origin to the same period as the poetry of the scalds. And yet there is a great difference between the two, both with regard to metre and the use of *kenningar*, the latter being employed with great moderation in the older poems of the Edda. Furthermore, the Eddic songs are anonymous, and not a single one can with any show of reason be ascribed to a known poet. The character of the poetry is also essentially different. The scaldic poems were written with reference to actual events of life; they are intimately connected with the life history of their authors or of the

kings. This in no way applies to the Edda, in which the sole aim is to tell a story or to communicate a definite content. No checkered life of viking and scald serves as background; they are myths and stories, poetically treated, either with a definite end in view, or as mere poetical exercises, in Norway, Iceland, and Greenland.

The name "Edda" is applied to two collections: the so-called Poetic Edda, a collection of songs with shorter or longer superscriptions and notes in prose, and the Snorra Edda, written in prose, but with numerous citations in verse, taken largely from the Poetic Edda. The word "Edda" occurs in the sense of great-grandmother, which is evidently meaningless as applied to this literature. At present it is usually interpreted as meaning "poetics," a designation that could properly be applied to the Snorra Edda alone. Other scholars bring the term into connection with the school of Oddi, established in Iceland by Sæmund.[1]

The critical problems connected with the origin of the separate songs, and with their compilation, are extremely intricate. The criteria employed in determining the origin of the individual songs consist, in the first place, of their language and metrics; secondly, of what they tell us concerning phenomena of nature, flora, and fauna; thirdly, of historical allusions; and, finally, of the results — cautiously applied — of the comparison of myths and sagas. On the basis of the evidence furnished by these criteria, we conclude that the Eddic poems were written during the Viking period, in Norway or Iceland.[2] The work of compilation, however, which furnished the occasion for

[1] So Eiríkr Magnússon in *The Saga-Book of the Viking Club* (see *Academy* of Nov. 30, 1895), and especially B. Symons, *Over afleiding en beteekenis van het woord Edda* (*Versl. en Med. k. Ak.*, 1898).

[2] See the table in Finnur Jónsson's *Lit. Hist.*, I, 65. He assigns most of the songs to Norway and to the tenth century, and regards only a part of *Hávamál* as old as the end of the ninth century. The Greenland and Icelandic heroic songs he assigns to the eleventh century, the Icelandic *Grípisspá* to even the twelfth century.

various interpolations, belongs to a later period and was, in fact, never brought to a close. While the most important poems are found in all of the manuscripts, yet, in the case of several songs that occur in some manuscripts and not in others, it is doubtful whether or not they are to be included in the Edda. The collection bears in no respect a religious character, and the Edda is therefore not to be classed among the "bibles," but is merely a collection of mythical and heroic songs, only slightly concerned with religious belief and wholly unconnected with the cult.

Of the thirty-five songs constituting the Poetic Edda, we may at once eliminate from our discussion the twenty that treat of the heroic sagas, namely those of the Volsungen-Nibelungen, the Helgi Lays, and the lay of Völund. These pieces have already been treated in a previous chapter. Nor is it feasible to discuss in detail the thirteen or fourteen songs that deal with the gods. They bear the names of *kvidha* (ballad), *mál* (aphoristic or didactic poem), *ljódh* (lay or song), *spá* (prophecy), *senna* (strife), *thula* (series). The contents as well as the general tone of these poems differ greatly. Attempts have at times been made to classify them according to the gods that play the chief rôle, the Odhin songs and the Thor songs more especially forming two distinct groups. There is, however, no good reason for forcing the detached pieces into a definite order. In some of these poems the genealogies receive especial attention. So in the *Hyndluljódh*, and in a different way in *Rígsthula*, where the story is related how Rig (Heimdallr) begets the progenitors of the three classes: thrael, karl, and jarl. Others consist in great part of lists of *kenningar* or mythical names that are given in more or less of a mythical setting; so *Grímnismál*, *Alvíssmál*, *Vafthrúdhnismál*. In some

H. Gering, on the other hand, attributes a larger share to Iceland, *Völuspa* among others, the Norwegian origin of which is, however, according to Hoffory and Symons, proved by the mention of a certain phenomenon of nature.

the myth has been made to do duty as a poetic *Märchen*. These tell, *e.g.* how Thor, disguised as Freyja, fetches back his hammer from the giant Thrym (*Thrymskvidha*), and how Freyr wins Gerdhr (*Skírnismál*). These two are perhaps the best and most widely known. It cannot be denied that numerous genuine nature-myths, intermingled more or less with foreign matter, lie concealed in these songs. For illustration we may mention the account (*Svipdagsmál*) of how Svipdag wins Menglǫdh, and the struggle of Thor with the Midhgardh-serpent (*Hymiskvidha*). Of a different character are the narratives of journeys undertaken by Odhin, in various disguises, to take counsel of wise women or to engage in a contest with a giant (*Vegtamskvidha* or *Baldrs Draumar*, and *Vafthrúdhnismál*). Entirely artificial is the spurious myth of Odhin, who, wounded by the spear, hung for nine nights on a tree that swayed to and fro in the wind. These enigmatical verses in *Hávamál* have been the occasion of much brain cudgelling. The poem (*Hárbardhsljódh*) in which Harbardh (Odhin) as ferryman refuses to take Thor across may possess some significance for the history of culture and religion. Each god recites his deeds, and great stress is laid on the superiority of Odhin over the uncouth, rustic Thor. This has been interpreted as expressing the antithesis between the old and the new era. That in the time of the warlike vikings and the poetic scalds Odhin, the god who welcomes warriors to Walhalla and who won the poets' mead, gradually supplanted Thor, is a theory that was advanced long ago and which has found ready acceptance with many scholars. In Norway, Thor was doubtless of old the chief god, as he was in Sweden alongside of Freyr, but Eddic song as well still assigns him a high rank,[1] and in Iceland he was zealously worshipped.

The greater part of these poems were probably written in Norway during the tenth century. If so, they take us back to

[1] *Lokasenna* especially.

the closing days of paganism. They show that the ancient gods engaged the attention and held the interest of men, but they do not give the least evidence of a living faith. The old gods occupy men's thoughts, people tell stories about them and derive a certain degree of pleasure from the recital of their adventures and accounts of their cunning. They resemble men, but are their superiors physically and have magic power at their disposal. It is this latter more especially, Odhin's ability to assume various disguises, and his control over all manner of occult wisdom and magic charms, that is held in very high esteem. There is no suggestion of moral obligation on the part of the gods, while of a spiritual struggle against the advance of Christianity there is no trace in these poems any more than of that far-famed melancholy, which, according to some, forms the keynote of the entire Norse mythology.

It remains to consider three Eddic poems whose importance demands a separate treatment. The first of these is *Völuspa*. The conception of this poem is grand beyond doubt. The prophetess (*völva*) is represented as telling of the origin of the world, of the first joyous meetings of the gods, the first war between Æsir and Vanir, the many evils that fate has in store for the gods, the final catastrophe, the struggle in which the gods fall, and finally of the restoration, the return of the gods reborn to a new existence. Into this general scheme, of which the above is only the bare outline, a number of myths have been woven, all told in more or less detail. The text of *Völuspa* is here and there corrupt,[1] and it also contains obvious interpolations, such as the catalogue of dwarfs, for example. So much time and energy have already been

[1] Vigfússon, in CPB., has made an attempt to reconstruct the text, more especially with the aid of the Snorra Edda. The result is a "prophecy of the three sibyls," but much of his work is very arbitrary. Müllenhoff, on the other hand, has given us a methodical reconstruction of the poem in DA. V, 1.

expended upon the study of this poem that it certainly cannot be considered premature to sum up the conclusions that are of interest for the history of religion.

The numerous views held concerning *Völuspa* may be reduced to three. According to the first of these, the poem is a learned product pieced together from Christian and classical models. This is the hypothesis of Bugge-Bang and E. H. Meyer, which has already been discussed in another connection. Müllenhoff, on the other hand, regards *Völuspa* as the noblest product of Teutonic antiquity. Triumphantly he refutes the greater part of the arguments advanced by his opponents, and very properly points out the parallels with regard to cosmogony and eschatology to be found elsewhere in the Teutonic world. He proves too much, however, and does not satisfactorily explain how a Norse poet came to develop these lofty conceptions so systematically; the historical background for the lofty flight is wanting. What induced the poet to sum up the tenets of the ancient religion? What enabled him to do it in the way in which he did? These questions Müllenhoff left unanswered. A third theory, that of Finnur Jónsson, is more satisfactory. According to him, *Völuspa* transports us to Norway during the period of internal ferment under king Hakon, the Christian foster son of Æthelstan. The efforts of the king to introduce Christianity set the minds of the people into commotion. Thereupon a sincere follower of the heathen faith successfully carried out the plan of uniting in one grand poem the heathen conceptions of the origin and the end of the world. The heathen myths furnished the material for the poem. The poet is, however, unconsciously under the influence of Christianity. He combats the latter without mentioning it by name. He has heard about the creation, about guilt and judgment, as well as about resurrection and restoration. The plan of drawing up an outline, from a religious point of view, of the origin and destruction of the world would scarcely have occurred to him

without an acquaintance with Christianity, and such an impulse is not noticeable elsewhere in Teutonic heathendom. He is therefore working with heathen material on a Christian framework. It is impossible to attempt to analyze here what is old and what more recent, what original and what borrowed, in this material. In its main features it is undoubtedly heathen, but the way in which these have been joined is new. The myths which in other songs show so few traces of a connection with belief, the poet of *Völuspa* attempts to make the basis of a religious conception of the world. What else than a fear of the encroachments of the Christian religion can have induced him to make this attempt?

It is not improbable that the obscure *Lokasenna* owes its origin to a similar environment. The gods are assembled for a banquet in the hall of Ægir, all except Loki and Thor. Loki thereupon enters the hall, and in a vivid dramatic style he and the other gods begin to bandy words, Loki vilifying all the gods and goddesses. Alluding to various myths, in part unknown to us, he rehearses all the scandals connected with their lives. Finally Thor appears. He alone of all the gods proves to be a match for Loki and succeeds in silencing him. A melancholy, a tragic, and a frivolous tone, — all have been discovered in this song. Lucian, Voltaire, Aristophanes have been called in for comparison. It has even been supposed that the poet was a Christian, who was fighting the Æsir with ridicule, — a theory which loses sight of the fact that Thor appears at the close in the principal rôle and vanquishes the slanderer. The poet was most likely a heathen in belief, who indignantly repudiates the impiety and blasphemy personified in Loki. Thor is mightier than falsehood and abuse.

Of the Eddic poems, *Hávamál* still remains to be considered. This poem does not form a unit, six heterogeneous pieces, fragments of myths and magic charms (*Ljódhatal*), having been combined under one title. The most important parts are

the first and the fourth, in which moral precepts, the fruit of experience, inculcating wisdom and admonishing caution, are laid down. These rather detailed poems furnish important data for a knowledge of the conditions of the times. As regards religion, they yield only a negative result, inasmuch as they show to how small an extent morality and life in general were permeated with religious ideas and motives. In one of these fragments [1] we even read that it is better not to pray at all than to make sacrifices to excess.

The sagas present a vivid picture of the life in Iceland during the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries. Although some two centuries intervene between the actual events and the time when they were recorded, yet in the narrow circles of the family, oral tradition not only preserved the names that made up the genealogical tree, but caused the deeds and adventures as well to live on in the memory. It is necessary to enter deeply into the study of the sagas if we would attain a full knowledge of this period; the mere recital of individual episodes, torn from their setting, can never reproduce the impression of the life of the time. Not that such a great amount of care has been bestowed, in literary execution, upon the delineation of the characters; they live because they have been taken from life. For this reason they stand out clearly before our mind's eye: Kjartan and Gudrun in the *Laxdœla;* the godhi Snorri in the *Eyrbyggja;* the chief characters in the *Njála*, Njal and Gunnar, who remain faithful friends, notwithstanding the evil promptings and open hostility of Hallgerd, Gunnar's wife; the noble Bergthora, who will not leave the husband to whom she has plighted her troth, but perishes with him at the *Njálsbrenna* (1011); Flosi, who has to expiate his guilt in connection with the latter through long years of exile and wanderings. These characters are perspicuous but also somewhat massive, without subtleness of

[1] Strophe 145 in the edition of Symons.

any kind. The feeling of honor is strongly developed; in feuds or vengeance exacted for homicide, it constitutes an even stronger motive than hatred or thirst for blood. The women, too, are strong characters. They are the equals of men, inciting them to vengeance or faithfully sharing their fate. Alongside of the feeling of personal honor, the feeling of respect for law exerts great influence; the decrees of the *Althing* are observed. This regard for law prevents the subversion of the state through the numberless private feuds. It is worthy of note that the law bears so slight a religious character. The change of faith brought about no important alterations in the political and juridical institutions.

A number of characteristic traits present themselves that are always met with wherever religious life possesses little vigor. The first of these is the luxuriant growth of various forms of superstition. The sagas are replete with accounts of ghosts of the dead haunting the earth, of blood-rain, of omens and of dreams, although the greater number of these dreams are to be regarded as spurious, *i.e.* as merely a form of literary fiction.[1] A fatalistic mood also frequently makes itself vaguely felt. The men, at other times nobly holding their own in strength and cunning, bow their heads when fate draws nigh. At such a moment they felt themselves *feigr* (Scottish *fey*), consecrated to death, and they manfully submitted to the inevitable.

The Icelanders began at an early period to pay attention to the history of the settlement of their own country and to the history of Norway. The first of these historians was Ari (1067–1148), to whose work Snorri Sturluson (1178–1241) refers as forming, alongside of the scaldic poems, the chief source of his own history. Snorri himself is one of the great figures of Icelandic history. He fell heir to the social position, the political talents, and literary traditions of one of the most

[1] See W. Henzen, *Ueber die Träume in der altnordischen Sagalitteratur* (1890).

distinguished Icelandic families. He was a statesman, and several times "law-speaker," was involved in the internal dissensions of Norway, and was assassinated at the secret command of the Norwegian king, whom he had antagonized. We are here, however, more directly interested in his literary activity, which was many-sided and extensive. He is the author of *Heimskringla*, a collection of sixteen sagas, giving a connected account of the history of Norway, and of the Snorra Edda, a compendium of the mythological and poetical treasures of Norse antiquity. In the case of both these works, Snorri's authorship has been denied, but on insufficient grounds. Nor is it necessary to regard these two collections as essentially heterogeneous. Poetry and history were of old closely bound together, the scalds participating in historical events, and their songs being intended to keep fresh the memory of great deeds.

The *Heimskringla* sketches history through the medium of biographies. The characters are clearly outlined, especially the persons of Harald Fairhair and of the two Olafs. Ancient scaldic verses are interspersed. For the study of history it constitutes a source of the very first rank, the author showing a clear insight into the connection of events. The first saga, the Ynglinga Saga, in part based on Thjodholf's *Ynglingatal*, is especially noteworthy. Like Saxo, Snorri treats the ancient myths in euhemeristic fashion. He tells of the arrival of Odhin from Asia, of his war with the Vanir, his settlement in Sweden, his prowess in battle, his skill in magic art, and finally of his death in Sweden "through sickness." Similarly, Njǫrdhr, Freyr, and Freyja led human lives before being worshipped as gods. In Sweden people still look to Freyr for fertility of the soil and peace.

Snorri as a mythographer excites our interest even more than as an historian. With the zeal of the scholar and collector, who is at the same time a descendant of the ancient scalds, he has worked over the poetic store of Norse literature. The most

important part of this Prose Edda is the treatise *Gylfaginning* (delusion or beguilement of king Gylfi), to which are joined the narratives of Bragi (*Bragarœdhur*). Then follows *Skáldskaparmál* (art of poetry), an interpretation of poetic metaphors (*kenningar*), and expressions (*heiti*), by means of myths and heroic sagas, and finally we have a poem of about a hundred strophes singing the praise of king Hakon and jarl Skuli, in which all the strophic forms of Norse metrics are employed (*Háttatal*). In the treatment of individual myths the question continually presents itself whether they are found in the Snorra Edda, and if so, in what form. We are at present concerned only with the point of view of the author, and with the tendency of his work.

In *Gylfaginning* king Gylfi receives instruction in mythology from the high one, the equally high one, and from the third (Har, Jafnhar, and Thridhi). The treatise also bears the name *Frá Ásum ok Ymi.* The subject-matter is derived in large part from the best known Eddic poems, from six or seven of which verses are cited, approximately in the form in which they have come down to us in the Edda. Material has been drawn from other sources as well. No strict sequence is observed in the order of treatment. The cosmogony is given with much detail, Ginnungagap (the yawning chasm) and Ymir, the first giant, playing prominent parts. It is, however, not possible to summarize in a coherent manner the events that are related, inasmuch as various conceptions cross one another. Then follows some nomenclature, the dwellings of the gods, the gods themselves, and a description of the tree Yggdrasil (*Askr Yggdrasils*). The two myths that are told at length are those of Loki and Thor. These are treated essentially as *Märchen*, especially the amusing account of the journey of Thor to Utgardhaloki. Here, too, the close is a description of the last battle of the gods and of the end of the world.

What is the purpose and meaning of *Gylfaginning*? The treatise itself, as well as its connection with other parts of the Snorra Edda, furnishes a satisfactory answer. It is a treatise on poetics, representing as it were an inventory of the ancient poetry, both as to form and content, and intended to serve as a manual for the still remaining scalds who were to continue the old traditions. Bugge has called Iceland the Ionia of the North and has compared Snorri with Herodotus. While I would not in any way detract from the merits of the author of *Heimskringla*, the compiler of the Snorra Edda reminds one rather of the learned men of the Alexandrian school. We cannot, therefore, properly speaking, inquire into the tendency of this work. A mythographer may, of course, regard myths from a definite point of view; but Snorri is intent only on collecting the poetic figures and expressions. Nothing beyond this is to be found in either *Gylfaginning* or *Bragarœdhur*, which latter contains some additional myths, those of Idhunn and Thjazi, and of the acquisition of the poets' mead.

It is a matter of considerable importance to determine in how far we must assume Christian elements in Snorri. It is certainly natural to suppose that an author of the thirteenth century, more than two hundred years after the conversion, does not write about creation and eschatology without Christian ideas coming to the surface. Behind the thinly veiled names of the three who make answer to king Gylfi, we may readily detect the trinity. Snorri also tells us of a supreme god, the All-Father, who existed before all else and whose life is eternal. Aside from this, I do not believe that Christian teachings constitute an important part of the conceptions of *Gylfaginning*. If they do, the dogmas have been concealed with remarkable skill, and it is difficult to understand with what end in view this should have been done.[1]

[1] Of the critical essays that have appeared on *Gylfaginning*, those of Mogk, in PBB. VI and VII, deserve special mention.

There is another problem, fully as important, connected with *Gylfaginning:* How are we to distinguish, in the material as handed down, between the genuine and the artificial poetic myths? While the myths as a whole are told after the fashion of stories, the forms and figures of the eschatology, and particularly of the cosmogony, doubtless represent in part genuine material, *i.e.* such as formed a part of popular belief. It is equally certain, however, that as a system it did not constitute part of the heathen religion. The same observation applies to the world-tree, the origin of which is to be traced to the imaginations of the scalds, and which does not, therefore, belong to popular belief. On the other hand, it would be rash, in the case of such conceptions as the ice-world, fire-world, primeval chasm, and numerous others, to draw the sweeping conclusion that they too are learned artificial products, for parallels to these conceptions abound in folklore.

Questions such as these did not, however, exist for Snorri and his contemporaries. He was concerned with collecting the mythological-poetical material. That in a Christian age he could do this without inward struggle or outside interference shows how little importance people attached to such a work from the point of view of religion. It does not represent something that at a certain period was actually an object of belief. It can therefore serve only as a source for disconnected episodes of both genuine and artificial poetic myths. The prevailing laws prove that in the North, as in Germany, heathen customs continued in vogue. Superstition was rife in various forms. According to Norwegian as well as Icelandic law, severe punishment was meted out to those guilty of magic practices in the healing or safeguarding of cattle, for maintaining the *Berserkrgangr* (Berserker-rage), sacrificing to the heathen gods on the ancient sacred places, faring to the Finns, and the use of various magic charms in home and field.

CHAPTER XI

FOLKLORE

"Folklore (*Volkskunde*) undertakes to investigate all the manifestations of the life of a people, that is to say, of a definite complex of human beings, be it thousands or millions, whose boundaries, historically and geographically, are accurately defined." It is, therefore, "a national and historical science." In one of its branches it investigates "the popular religious opinions and observances, usually comprised under the name of superstitions."[1]

These are the words of K. Weinhold in a very brief but excellent essay, in which he pleads for an historical treatment of what is usually called folklore, a name that has been the subject of some controversy. Accepting Weinhold's exposition, we shall, therefore, have to reserve a place in our historical survey for Teutonic folklore of the Middle Ages and of more recent times.

The task of mythology in the study of folklore is to point out the heathen elements in various *Märchen*, customs, popular usages, and legal institutions. From the nature of the case, we can here only draw the main outlines and bring forward illustrative examples.

At the very outset we must draw a rather sharp line of demarcation between the stories and the customs. The latter have struck far deeper root in the life of the people than the former. Scholars have long given the *Märchen* undue prominence. Myths were traced in them; the *Märchen* was "the poor relation" of myth and heroic saga, the "patois" of mythology.

[1] K. Weinhold, *Was soll die Volkskunde leisten*, ZfVuS. (1890), pp. 1–5.

The Sleeping Beauty in the forest was Brunhild; the tale of the faithful John, the myth of Freyr and Gerdhr; an account of the burgomaster of Cologne, who killed a lion in the year 1276, could be nothing else than the myth of Tyr. But this view, although apparently supported by a large number of examples, is now recognized as untenable. In the first place, it is not obvious how and why so large a number of myths should have been converted into popular tales. It has, moreover, been proved that many of these tales are of Oriental origin, having reached Europe through literary channels, and were preserved only after being recast in the popular imagination. Finally, a large number of identical story types may be traced in myths, heroic sagas, and popular tales. Their agreement and spread do not admit of a further explanation.

The case is different with respect to the numerous elements of popular belief and popular usage that may be reduced to conceptions which everywhere characterize the lower stages in the development of the human race. The belief in souls and spirits that roam about, in demoniac possession, in metamorphosis, in a correspondence between vegetable and animal life, in the universal character of soul, in the magic power of various formulas and practices, — in what since the time of Tylor has passed under the general name of "animism," [1] — is encountered everywhere. In the case of more highly developed peoples, this is held to represent a survival of the primitive savage state. From this point of view "ethnographic parallels" are constantly sought for; what is found, for example, among the Teutons is illustrated by similar customs, perchance of Polynesians, or, nearer at hand, of the nations of classical antiquity. It is obvious, however, that this method does not result in reproducing a picture of the life of a definite people; that in the present instance not what is characteristically Teutonic, but Teutonic parallels for general conceptions, no

[1] See his *Primitive Culture*, Chapters 11–17.

matter how rich, are brought into relief. Thus Mannhardt arranged the material gathered from the series of questions he had sent to all points of the compass, not historically, but according to certain general points of view.

The question naturally presents itself, whether there is a sufficient amount of material at hand for a different, for a truly historical, treatment of folklore. Fortunately, so far as the Teutonic nations are concerned, this question can be answered in the affirmative. The data usually comprised under the name of folklore constitute part of the material through which we become acquainted with the civilization, the manners, and the customs of a people in the different periods of its historical existence. Folklore is an important study only in connection with this history of culture, and nowhere are we better able to study folklore in its historical environment than on Teutonic soil.

Of a number of usages, we possess direct testimony that they have come down from heathen times, in that they were prohibited as such by West-Gothic, Frankish, or Anglo-Saxon synods, or in ecclesiastical documents. Heathen games, horse races, banquets immediately preceding Ascension day, worship of springs, various kinds of magic blessings, and similar customs, the church strenuously sought to eradicate as survivals of Teutonic paganism. In popular legal forms also and in symbolic actions there is not a little that may be classed under this head. Even in the late Middle Ages a throw with a stone hammer determined the boundary of a field, a custom that must certainly be of ancient origin, since a stone hammer was not a tool commonly used by an archbishop of Mainz or a count of Nassau. The same applies to the figures of the ancient gods that lie concealed behind the personages of Christian saints. Donar-Thor, with his hammer, his red beard, and the dragon that he slays, is clearly recognizable in St. George and St. Olaf; Wodan, with hat, mantle, and dapple-gray

horse, or as a wild huntsman, appears in the guise of St. Martin and St. Michael.

There is an extensive literature on the subject of pagan elements in popular belief and observances. In studying these elements, a distinction must be made, not only between what is national and what is universal, what is Teutonic and what is foreign, but also between what has really come down from heathen times and what originated at a later period. In the Middle Ages and even in modern times, the people formed mental images and fashioned customs of life on the pattern of pagan conceptions. Pagan ideas and pagan figures thus continue to exist, but not in fixed, immutable forms. The people are not bound to them, but preserve the old in new and characteristic combinations, adding to the old various new features. Only in this way can we account for existing facts and vindicate for Teutonic folklore an historical character of its own, as an important element in the general history of culture. A few examples will serve to illustrate these statements. We must perforce be brief in our consideration of the subject, since the detailed treatment does not lie within the scope of the present volume.

The collections of popular tales and sagas, arranged according to districts, show how all manner of stories are associated with particular places. Especially forests and springs, but also old castles, are still visited by white women or the old lords of the castle. What strikes us in these stories is that the references to elemental spirits or souls haunting the earth are not of a general character, but that definite occurrences are related. Hence these tales constitute an essential part of the life of the people. Several of their characteristic features have been derived from prehistoric heathen times.

Forests were held in especial veneration by the ancient Teutons. Similarly, Christian synods were compelled to inveigh continually against the worship of springs. We have

repeatedly pointed out how much value was attached to keeping alive the memory of the old ancestors and to doing homage to the semi- or totally mythical progenitor of the tribe. But what the peasantry still tell and believe is not simply the echo of the belief of fifteen hundred or more years ago. Historical occurrences from the earlier or later Middle Ages are found as well in these accounts. A collection such as that which Müllenhoff made for the district of Sleswick-Holstein shows this very clearly. Various stories are still current among the people of the ancient mythical characters of Sceaf and Scyld. Tales are also told of a black Griet or a tall Pier, people who have actually existed, but who are treated entirely on the same basis as mythical characters. Finally, a variety of stories are told among the people, the origin of which is not to be traced to either myths or sagas: restricted to a definite locality, they represent a poetically imaginative continuation of ancient belief and custom.

The calendar is especially instructive in this regard.[1] To take an example from the months: In Iceland the names of the first four months of the year are Thorri, Goi, Einmánadhr, Harpa. There is no mythology behind these names. They are largely appellative in origin. But a myth has been created out of them: Thor and Goi are the parents of Einman and Harpa. Each was fetched in and welcomed at the beginning of his or her month: Thor by the husbands, Goi by the wives, and Einman and Harpa by the boys and girls, respectively. The bóndi who brought Thor in limped around his house, clad in a shirt and with only one leg in his trousers, and gave a feast, at which there was great merriment. These are customs that have a heathen look about them, and which yet do not go back to heathen times.

[1] There exists an extensive literature on this subject, extending from the calendar in Finn Magnusen's *Lexicon*, an ill-digested compilation with highly arbitrary interpretations, to the admirable little volume of K. Weinhold, *Die deutschen Monatsnamen* (1869).

The festival of Nerthus and the ship of Isis show that, as early as the days of Tacitus, the change of seasons was celebrated among the German tribes with processions. We are therefore justified in regarding the numerous springtime processions in which a ship was drawn about on a wagon, encountered especially in the region of the Lower Rhine,[1] as a continuation of a heathen custom. But the people did not stop there. Everywhere the new season is brought in and the winter driven out; or verdant summer, symbolized by a girl dressed in white and gaily bedecked with ribbons, and winter, bundled up in straw and furs, sing an alternate song; or merry guests fetch in the May queen, or the *Pfingstlümmel.* All this represents a new warp on an old woof. It would be as preposterous to trace all this to Teutonic paganism as to attribute to it any special religious significance.

Similarly, in the case of the fires kindled to ward off misfortune, the so-called *Notfeuer* (need-fire),[2] and the many observances connected with the harvest and the breeding of cattle.[3] Doubtless these are survivals of heathen customs. In the case of the Scandinavian North, it is expressly stated that Freyr received sacrifices for the fruitfulness of the soil. But it would be far-fetched to trace all the details of modern usage to the heathen period. The greater part of it has sprung up from a root of paganism in a Christian soil. Such religious significance as may be detected in it bears a heathen character, even where the customs are of later origin. But in the case of the "last sheaf," and the magic brooms with which cattle are touched to drive out the spirits that cause sickness, and the like, the religious idea has come to be quite secondary. This much is certain, that the observances as found at present

[1] See the description in Grimm, DM.[4], pp. 214 ff.

[2] *Nodfyr* is already mentioned in the *Indiculus superstitionum.*

[3] Important books on this subject are: U. Jahn, *Die deutschen Opfergebräuche bei Ackerbau und Viehzucht* (1884), and H. Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntefeste im heidnischen und christlichen Cultus* (1878).

have become an integral part of German peasant life and, having been modified to meet local conditions, constitute an essential element of the historical life of the people.

The conception of the Wild Hunt or the Furious Host plays an important part in popular belief. Since the Middle Ages, such conceptions are met with under various names, the former more commonly in North, the latter in South, Germany.

The general notion underlying this conception may easily be determined. In the raging and howling of the tempest the wild hunter and his train are recognized. This hunter is usually Wodan, the god of the wind, who is at the same time the god of the dead. This train is made up of the souls of the departed. Dying we find occasionally designated as "joining the old host." While the elements that enter into the conception are therefore two in number, the wind and the company of souls, there have not only been added a number of other features, but in many places and in various localities the conception has assumed a special character. In one place the train issues from a particular mountain, in another particular individuals are designated as forming a part of it.

Here, again, the student of folklore should not seek exclusively for general parallels with conceptions that are current elsewhere, but should first of all inquire what special features distinguish the Teutonic conception. The "host" rushing through the air is found in a large number of special variations. The "wild hunt" or "furious host" is connected with various times of the year, with definite localities, — more especially mountains, — with semi-mythical stories, such as the chase in pursuit of an animal or woman, with the fate of the soul after death, with individual persons whose savagery seemed to deserve this punishment of being compelled to wander about restlessly, with various prognostications associated in the minds of the people with wind and aërial phenomena, and with many other things. We do not, of course, claim that the enormous

mass of material gathered on this subject in the way of popular tales and stories, of observances and superstitions, admits of strictly historical arrangement. Nor is it maintained that all of it, as existing in the Christian Middle Ages and in the life of the peasantry in modern times, has been handed down from Teutonic heathendom. The popular imagination has given further development to an already existing germ. It is clear, at any rate, that in this Wild Hunt the great "hell-hunter," Wodan, still survives among the people. If not necessarily, the Wild Hunt is at least frequently, directly connected with the god Wodan, and the whole conception attains among the Teutons a vividness, clearness, and variety that is equalled nowhere else. The historical element in folklore, therefore, implies that, apart from the numerous historical reminiscences to be found in the hunt or the host, one or more of its members may be identified with persons of whose memory the people still stand in awe.

Everywhere in Teutonic folklore we meet with giants and dwarfs. In whole series of popular tales and narratives they play the chief rôle. They persist, furthermore, in a number of popular customs; the elves, at any rate, are even accorded some species of religious worship. It is, of course, an easy matter to trace general ethnographic parallels for giants and dwarfs. Elemental spirits of mountain, forest, and water, wild men of the woods, giant mountain spirits, dexterous gnomes, teasing goblins, are found among various peoples. To picture the life of this queer folk, the Grimms turned to Ireland.[1]

But alongside of these general features the Teutonic world shows much that is characteristic. Not merely that we can here gather the richest harvest of examples of this widespread belief, but the giants and elves have also taken on the character of the land and people. They too are localized, are

[1] *Irische Elfenmärchen* von den Brüdern Grimm (1826; with a comprehensive Introduction).

connected with definite mountains or springs, are interwoven with the history of a village or family. Many of them, dwarfs especially, bear names and have thus become real personages. While among Balto-Slavic nations the family and house spirits play the leading rôle, among Teutons this is taken by the spirits of nature. The distinction is, of course, not an absolute one, but merely one of degree. The special characteristics of the giants are unwieldiness and wisdom, of the dwarfs skill and cunning. In the Norse mythology of the Edda there are indications of a conception of the giants as an older race of gods, a power inimical to the Æsir. This idea has not, however, been developed as systematically as in the case of the Greek Titans and Giants. In German folklore, and in that of France and England as well, there appears now and then the poetic conception that elves strive through the love of man to acquire an immortal soul. The conception is popular, but not heathen in origin.

In discussing Teutonic folklore, we are continually struck by the fact that it is not possible to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the figures of the "lower" mythology which still live on in it and those of mythology proper. The theory which explains the one as the development of the other is as unsatisfactory as that which sees in folklore merely a popular degenerated form of mythology. There are several classes of beings which we cannot group exclusively on either the one side or the other. So in the case of the giants and dwarfs, who belong to folklore, but at the same time play a part in numerous myths, and who even occupy a place in the cult. The same applies to the Norns and Walkyries. The Norns especially play a rôle in many a *Märchen*, and yet they also require consideration in connection with the pantheon, in which the Teutons believed.

We are here only concerned with giving specific examples, and there is no need of largely multiplying these. The Norse

Berserkers alone still remain to be considered. These raging and foaming heroes, who during the intervals when they are possessed are endowed with supernatural strength, are also encountered elsewhere. But who could overlook the characteristically Norse way in which they are treated? Whenever the warlike Scandinavians make mention of ecstatic conditions or supernatural powers, they have in mind exclusively the exhibition of physical, superhuman strength. Hence the Berserkers are not to be regarded chiefly in the light of ethnographic data, to be grouped under the head of demoniac possession or metamorphosis,[1] but they typify the history of Norse ideas and sentiments.

In this historical treatment of folklore a question suggests itself, which has frequently been asked, and whose consideration may fittingly find a place at the close of our historical survey. What line of historical development would Teutonic paganism have followed if its course had not been interrupted by the introduction of Christianity? Does not this enormous mass of folklore, which has struck such deep roots in the life of the people, prove that paganism still possessed vitality; that when the current was shut off from the higher circles of life it flowed along in another bed, that of the life of the people, for the sole reason that it was forced to do so?

Questions of this kind, that concern what might have been but was not, can never be answered with absolute certainty. And yet we may, in the present instance, arrive at a decision with some degree of assurance. We have found no trace, either among the southern Teutons, who were converted to Christianity at the time of the migrations, or among the Scandinavian nations, of a system of doctrines evolved or handed down by priests and which became a power among the people. In the attempts made by the Scandinavians to systematize

[1] Berserkers are men who have assumed the form of bears.

their myths, motives of a religious character may be detected perhaps only in the case of *Völuspa* and *Lokasenna*, and here only to a certain extent. The opinion that the Teutons, if they had not been Christianized, would have arrived at more spiritual and monotheistic conceptions, has absolutely no basis on which to rest, and it is in view of our knowledge of existent conditions wholly inadmissible. An organized form of worship, too, is altogether lacking among the Southern Teutons, and is found among the Scandinavian peoples in only the simplest forms. How little the priests were interested in maintaining paganism we have seen both in the case of the Anglo-Saxons and of the Icelandic godhi.

Alongside of the political and national motives influencing Frisians, Saxons, and Norsemen, the strongest bulwarks of paganism were the attachment to the ancient sacred places and observances, the belief in the presence of divine beings in forest and stream, the old processions at the changing of the seasons, the vows pledged over the cup to this or that god. These beliefs and customs survive as folklore, although by no means all of the survivals date from the heathen period. Indeed, by far the larger part are of later origin. At the same time we recognize in this folklore a form of historical continuity, the bond of union between the life of the people in pagan and in Christian times.

CHAPTER XII

THE PANTHEON

Wodan-Odhin

The name Wôdan (High German *Wuotan*, Anglo-Saxon *Wóden*, Norse *Ódhinn*) is derived from the Indo-European root *wâ* (to blow) and therefore designates the wind god. While there is an intimate connection in the language and thought of various peoples between the notions *wind* and *spirit*, we must yet not think of Wodan as a spiritual deity; such a conception was entirely foreign to Teutonic paganism. Other etymologies that have been proposed, such as connect the name with the Old English *wood* and German *wüten*,[1] or with the Old Norse *ódhr* (spirit) or with the Latin *vates*,[2] are untenable.

The rendering of *dies Mercurii* by *Wôdenesdæg*, which we encounter from the third century onward, makes it certain that the Mercurius found in Tacitus and other Latin authors is to be identified with Wodan. The points of resemblance between the Teutonic and the Roman god are less obvious. They must be sought in either the attributes of the god or in special characteristics of his cult. It is furthermore to be remembered that the Romans had already assigned to the chief god of the Gauls the name Mercurius. It is hardly likely that the Romans of the period of the Empire were influenced by the consideration that both Wodan and Hermes-Mercurius were originally wind deities. A closer connection is established by the similarity in the nature of the two as

1 "Wodan, id est furor" (Adam of Bremen).
2 Vigfússon, CPB. I, CIV. So also Kauffmann.

gods of the dead, and by the symbols of the hat and staff, which are common to both. Yet Tacitus shows scarcely a trace of these connections. He associates the Teutonic Mercurius more especially with war. The identification of Wodan with Mercurius accordingly remains somewhat singular, and we can readily understand why, at a later age, Saxo should have taken exception to it, and in one instance even have used Mars to designate Odhin.

The express testimony of Tacitus, Paulus Diaconus, and others, as well as Odhin's place at the head of the Norse pantheon, were formerly regarded as sufficient to establish the position of Wodan as the chief god of all Teutons. This opinion has now gradually been abandoned by the majority of scholars. Müllenhoff, Weinhold, Mogk, and many others hold that Wodan was originally a god of the Istvæones, and that his worship was disseminated by the Rhine-Franconians, supplanting that of the old sky god Tiu.

We must ever bear in mind that among the ancient Teutons, — the German tribes of Tacitus and the peoples of the period of migrations, — there existed no pantheon in the sense of the later Norse mythology. Tacitus merely remarks: "Of the gods they pay highest honors to Mercury." Paulus Diaconus observes that Mercury was worshipped by all Teutons, though this statement is open to inquiry.

The existence of the cult of Wodan in Upper Germany, among the Alemanni, Bavarians, and Suabians seems doubtful. His name is but rarely met with there, and even the day of the week, which elsewhere bears the name of Wodan, is there called *Mittwoch*. This does not, to be sure, prove absolutely that the god was not worshipped. Opposed to this latter assumption is the circumstance that the name Wodan is found in the runic inscription of the so-called Nordendorf Brooch, and in the *Vita Columbani* of the seventh century. The attempts that have been made to set aside these facts are

unwarranted. Besides, here as elsewhere, an *argumentum e silentio* is not conclusive. We know so little concerning the cult and gods of the Alemanni and Bavarians,[1] that the entire absence or rare occurrence of the name of a god in the sources at our command by no means proves that the god in question was unknown to these tribes.

In Middle Germany, among the Chatti and the (Suabian) Hermunduri, Mercury (Wodan) was found alongside of Mars (Tiu), according to Tacitus, *Annals*, XIII, 57.[2] We have already commented upon the occurrence of Wodan in the second Merseburg magic formula.[3] In the *Annals of Fulda*, of the ninth century, Uotan as proper name is frequently found.[4] Through the entire extent of Northern Germany Wodan survives in the name of the fourth week-day, and that his cult was not spread solely through Frankish influence would seem to follow from the occurrence of his name among the Frisians and Saxons. In the formula of abjuration[5] he is one of the three chief gods. It is, however, at times difficult to determine where Wodan is original and where he has been introduced at a later period, as we have already seen in the case of the tribal saga of the Lombards.[6] Among the Anglo-Saxon tribes who crossed to England, the cult of Wodan must have been very widespread, as is evidenced by the genealogical tables and by the numerous proper names.[7] Concerning the gods of the ancient Danes, we are not in a position to form a definite opinion, as the data at hand are insufficient. What Saxo relates of Othinus represents, in the main, myths of later date, euhemeristically conceived, which are, moreover, not wholly Danish in origin.

[1] See above, pp. 120–121.
[2] See above, p. 103.
[3] Page 128, above.
[4] K. Müllenhoff, *Zur deutschen Mythologie*, ZfdA. XII, 401. Seventeen instances are cited.
[5] See above, p. 125.
[6] See above, p. 80.
[7] See J. M. Kemble, *The Saxons in England*, I, pp. 335–346, whose data are, however, not altogether reliable.

That Wodan-Odhin was not unknown among the Scandinavian group of peoples may be inferred from the designation "Geatas" as the name of a people, derived, like "Gaut" and probably also "Gapt," the progenitor of the East-Gothic Amali, from a cognomen of Odhin. And yet the Odhin of Norse literature was to a large extent introduced from outside and developed artificially at the hands of the scaldic poets. Henry Petersen[1] was the first to show conclusively that in Norway the worship of Thor was the national and general one. Thus, in *Harbardhsljódh*, Thor is represented as the god of the peasants, Odhin as the god of the nobles and poets. Odhin has accordingly been regarded as the *Saxagodh* (the Saxon-god), imported from Germany, the Franks, as in the case of the heroic saga, being instrumental in spreading his cult. Granting that this view is correct, it does not follow that the Norse conceptions and legends connected with Odhin are the result of arbitrary invention. They require critical scrutiny, but genuinely mythical features are not absent, although, as has already been pointed out,[2] it is always extremely difficult to distinguish in the study of mythology the essential and fundamental from the external and artificial elements.

When we inquire into the nature of Wodan-Odhin, we find that it is not feasible to trace to a single origin his numerous and greatly diversified functions and attributes. He is the god of the wind, of agriculture, of war, of poetry, the progenitor of many families, etc. Between some of these attributes it is indeed possible to point out a connection. Thus the wind god is also elsewhere the leader of souls (*psychopompos*); tillage of the soil is in part dependent upon the wind; war may be compared with the tempest; some scholars have even suggested the characteristic variableness and changeableness of the wind as a factor. For all that, the exact transitions and combinations in thought and conception remain more or

[1] See above, p. 37. [2] Page 3.

less obscure, and we shall therefore confine ourselves to a survey of the chief functions and the myths of the god.

Wodan, the wind god, is encountered in the popular belief of all parts of Germany as the leader of the Furious Host and the Wild Hunt.[1] Historically we are unable to trace this conception to a date earlier than the twelfth century, unless we identify the *feralis exercitus* of the savage Harii[2] with the host of Wodan.[3] While the evidence is of a comparatively recent date, the conception itself is doubtless old and original, for, as Usener[4] remarks, "the conception of a heavenly host which rushes through the sky at night is probably not foreign to any European nation." We recognize this same host in the Amazons, the Thyades, etc., at times represented as sweeping along through the air above, and then again associated with one or another deity, such as Artemis and Dionysos. Among Teutonic nations Wodan as hell-hunter (*helljäger*) commands *Wuotes her* (Wuote's host). The journey frequently begins and ends in a mountain, the so-called Wodan's mountains, or "hat-mountains" (*Hutberge*), that foretell the weather, and are the abode of the god himself, or of elves and souls. The Wild Hunt is at times in pursuit of an animal, a boar, cow, deer, or again of a woman, the *Windsbraut*. When a storm is raging, the host draws near. The beginning of the winter, the ill-famed Twelve Nights, is more especially its chosen time. When the train approaches, people hide; in Suabia an admonisher (*Ermahner*) leads the way, who warns men to stand aside that no harm may befall them. While at times it presages fertility, it is usually a sign of calamity or war. The names used to designate the Furious Host, and particularly its commander, are many. While it is customary to recognize Wodan

[1] See above, pp. 216–217.
[2] Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 43.
[3] So Grimm, DM.[4], p. 793; E. H. Meyer, GM., § 319.
[4] *Götternamen*, p. 42.

in this great *helljäger*, it is yet not correct to regard all these names simply as epithets or personifications of this divinity. Hackelberend, Herodes, Dietrich of Bern, Herzog Abel, Rübezahl, Ruprecht, the storm demon Wode, and others have all a separate, independent existence, although they are at times merged more or less completely with Wodan.

Popular tradition pictures Wodan as riding on a dapple-gray horse, with a broad-brimmed hat and a wide cloak. The Scandinavian Odhin, similarly, rides on his steed Sleipnir or Yggdrasil, wears a soft hat, a long gray beard, and is one-eyed. He is also frequently represented as a wanderer. Numerous surnames bear reference to this: *viator indefessus* (indefatigable wayfarer) in Saxo, *vídhförull* (the far-traveller) in Snorri, *gangráðhr* and *gangleri* (wanderer), *vegtamr* (wanderer), *svipall* (the changeable one), *váfudhr* (the hovering one), *ómi* (the noisy one), *hróptr* (crier), and many others. Even later Norse literature testifies to the fact that Odhin rules wind and weather and shows his wrath in the tempest. The scalds have furnished him with a complete poetic outfit, of which it seems doubtful whether it demands or even admits a mythical interpretation. If so, his wolves Geri and Freki would be the hounds of the Wild Huntsman, his ravens Huginn and Muninn (thought and memory) the air in motion, his spear Gungnir lightning. But, as already stated, this interpretation is very uncertain.

If we may place reliance on German proverbs that make the fruitfulness of field and orchard dependent not only on sun and rain, but also on the wind, then Wodan's character as god of agriculture and of the harvest is intimately connected with his nature as a wind god.[1] In Mecklenburg, as in Sweden, the last ears of grain are left standing for Wodan's horse. In Bavaria too the horse and hounds of the god were fed, and as late as the previous century the harvest was called *Wuudlsmähe*

[1] A. Kuhn, ZfdA. V, 472–494.

(Waudl's mowing). Opinions differ in how far observances in connection with the last sheaf, the Wodel-beer, and other customs at harvest time were originally connected with the worship of Wodan. It should be noted, however, that Wednesday, an unlucky day, as a rule, for other purposes, is regarded as lucky for sowing and planting.

Some scholars hold that Wodan's character as god of the dead is even more original than that as god of the wind. The souls of the dead are represented as sweeping along with him through the air, or as dwelling in the mountain. It seems bold to regard both Wodan and the Æsir as chthonic deities, opposed to the Vanir as gods of light, — an opinion to which we shall recur in our discussion of the Vanir, — and still bolder to deduce from a single inscription, "Mercuri Channini," found in the valley of the Ahr, a god Henno, who is identified with the Mercurius-Wodan of Tacitus, and who is also to be recognized in the forest of Baduhenna, in the medieval exclamation *iâ henne* (by Henno, *i.e.* Wodan), in the Henneberg (mountain of the dead), in the Hünen (*i.e.* the dead), and in *Freund Hein* (*i.e.* death).[1] It is in any case certain that both German popular tradition and Norse literature make Wodan-Odhin the god of the dead in general, and of fallen heroes in particular (Valfadhir, Valgautr); once he is also represented as the ferryman of the dead.

A curious combination, perhaps solely the handiwork of the scaldic poets, found at all events in a number of *kenningar*, makes Odhin the god of those hung (*hangatýr*), lord of the gallows (*galga valdr*), which latter is also called his steed.

His character as god of war is no doubt closely connected with that of god of the dead. The human sacrifices offered,

[1] So Th. Siebs, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, I (ZfdPh. XXIV, 145–157); Scherer, on the contrary (SBA. 1884, I, 577), regards *Channini* as a mutilated form, and proposes to read *Channini[fatium]*. It seems strange, however, that the Channine fates should be met with in the valley of the Ahr.

according to the testimony of Tacitus, to Wodan by tribes of Western and Central Germany unquestionably were an homage to him as god of war. Among Anglo-Saxons and Lombards it is he who dispenses victory, and in the Scandinavian North princes bring sacrifices to him *til sigrs* (for victory) and warriors whet their swords against the Odhin-stone. The god himself is called *siggautr*, *sigfadhir* (father of victory), and, in a *kenning*, battle is designated as the storm or weather of Odhin. In many a combat he takes an active part; he teaches the Norse king the wedge-shaped battle array (*svínfylking*) and in the fight at Bravallir it is he who in disguise leads Harald to a glorious death on the field of battle.[1] It has been maintained that those about to die a straw death intentionally wound themselves with a spear, that they may as warriors go to Odhin, and in the Ynglinga Saga (*Heimskringla*), Chapter 10, this is told of the god himself. All this, however, amounts to little more than literary fiction.

The Viking period saw the development in the North of the conception of Walhalla,[2] the paradise of the heroes who had fallen in battle, the *Einherjar*, who there lead a life of continuous combat as well as of joyous feasting. This conception too does not owe its origin to the free fancy of the scalds, but has its roots in a popular belief common to all Teutonic nations. Walhalla is merely the Norse form of the abode of the spirits that go to Wodan-Odhin, corresponding to the mountains in which kings and emperors dwell in company with the god. There is clearly a connection between the *Einherjar* and the combatants of the *Hjadhningavíg*,[3] who begin the struggle anew every night. The accounts of this unending combat and the abode of the dead have, however, been greatly elaborated and embellished in Norse poetry. Walhalla in Gladhsheimr,

[1] See above, pp. 169–170.

[2] Cf. A. Schullerus, *Zur Kritik des altnordischen Valhollglaubens*, PBB. XII, 221–282.

[3] See above, p. 176.

the home of joy, is the meeting place of heroes, who daily issue forth through the five hundred and forty gates to divert themselves in combat, and who return at night to drain the cup that is offered them by the Walkyries. An Eddic song[1] gives the following description of this splendid abode:

Easily to be known is,
By those who to Odhin come,
The mansion by its aspect.
Its roof with spears is laid,
Its hall with shields is decked,
With corselets are its benches strewed.

Easily to be known is,
By those who to Odhin come,
The mansion by its aspect.
A wolf hangs
Before the western door,
Over it an eagle hovers.

A beautiful song of the tenth century, the *Eiriksmál*,[2] tells how Odhin awakens joyfully in Walhalla, because a powerful prince is about to enter, to whom, since he stands in need of heroes in Walhalla, he has denied victory. With a thundering tumult, as though a company of a thousand were approaching, Eirikr and five other kings thereupon make their entry:

Bragi calls out: What is that thundering, as if a thousand men or some great host were tramping on — the walls and the benches are creaking withal — as if Baldr were coming back to the hall of Odhin?

Odhin answers: Surely thou speakest foolishly, good Bragi, although thou art very wise. It thunders for Eric the king, that is coming to the hall of Odhin. Sigmund and Sinfjǫtli, rise up in haste, and go forth to meet the prince! Bid him in if it be Eric, for it is he whom I look for.

Sigmund answers: Why lookest thou more for Eric the king to Odhin's hall than for other kings?

Odhin answers: Because he has reddened his brand and borne his bloody sword in many a land.[3]

[1] *Grímnismál*, 9, 10. The translation is that of Thorpe.
[2] See above, p. 184. [3] CPB. I, pp. 260, 261

Such is Wodan-Odhin as god of the dead. The souls of men ride with him through the air, or live in the mountain; the heroes that the Walkyries have brought him from the field of battle dwell in Walhalla. That he is also the progenitor of numerous royal families is probably closely connected with this same function: elsewhere the god of the dead is also the first ancestor. At any rate, the attributes that we have considered up to this point form a part of the common popular belief, of which traces are found among Teutonic tribes on every side. They must, therefore, have constituted an integral part of the life of the people, although we do not know with what rites or ceremonies they were associated.

While the Norse myths are in the main the creation of scaldic and Eddic poetry, they nevertheless contain a genuinely mythical kernel. In them Odhin has become the chief god, who is the dispenser of all good gifts:

> He gives victory to some, and wealth to others, readiness of speech to many, and wisdom to the children of men. He gives fair wind to sailors, song to poets, and manly valor to many a hero.[1]

The gifts of wisdom and poetry here mentioned we have not touched upon as yet. They are strongly emphasized in Norse mythology, and in Germany too we have already met Wodan as the god that pronounced the efficacious magic charm. In Scandinavia he is the god of runes and of all magic arts, of which the Ynglinga Saga (Chapters 6 and 7) gives a circumstantial account. In knowledge and secret wisdom he excels the wisest giants (*Vafthrúdhnismál*), and he imparts these traits to young Agnar as a reward for having refreshed the stranger — no other than the god himself in disguise — whom the king had maltreated (*Grímnismál*). At times he enters the hall of kings as a guest (*gestr blindi*, *i.e.* blind guest), to whom he then propounds riddles, such as the well-known

[1] *Hyndluljódh*, 3.

riddles set to king Heidhrek,[1] or whose senses he confuses, as in the case of the remarkable visits to the two Christian kings Olaf, that have been preserved in five different versions.[2]

On the finding of runes we possess a most curious fragment in *Hávamál*, 138 and 139:

I wot that I hung
The windy beam upon
Nights all nine
With spear wounded
And given to Odhin
Self unto myself.

With loaf they cheered me not
Nor with no horn,
I spied adown,
I caught up runes,
Crying I caught,
Fell I thence again.[3]

Concerning the meaning of these lines opinions greatly differ. Müllenhoff recognizes a profound myth in them: the finding of the runes was brought about through the self-sacrifice of Odhin. Bugge regards them as patterned after Christ on the cross, but this does not commend itself. The lines are, however, to be viewed in the light of a poetic fabrication rather than of a

[1] "The *framework* of this poem, which binds together a collection of riddles of the same type as those of the early English and medieval riddle poets, is the visit of Wodan disguised as a blind wayfarer to king Heidhrek, the famous riddle-reader, at Yule-tide. The king, after solving all Wodan's questions, at length fails to answer the one ('What did Wodan whisper into Baldr's ear ere he was borne to the pyre?') which was fatal to Vafthrudhni, and falls like him a victim to the 'pride of learning'" (CPB. I, 87).

[2] The Heidhrek riddles: CPB. I, 86–92, and N. M. Petersen, *Danmarks historie i hedenold*[2], III, 235–246. See also *Hervararsaga*, Chapter 12; Olaf Tryggvason Saga (*Heimskringla*), Chapter 71; *Fornmanna Sögur*, II, 138, and V, 171, 299; *Nornagests Háttr.* Compare also Uhland, *Schr.*, VI, 305–314.

[3] The translation is that of Eiríkr Magnússon, in *Odin's Horse Yggdrasil* (1895), p. 18. He considers the second half of strophe 138 interpolated and puts in its stead the lines that I regard with Müllenhoff and Gering as a later addition, and which are, accordingly, omitted above.

genuine myth. Their real meaning is in any case no longer ascertainable.

Greater significance is to be attached to Odhin's intercourse with Mimir, through which the god obtains wisdom which he values so highly that he gives his eye for it as a pledge. Mimir lives in the well at one of the roots of the world-tree, which he keeps fresh and strong by watering it. Odhin consults him continually. In the extreme need of the gods and of the world he speaks with Mimir's head, the head that had been cut off by the Vanir but which Odhin had kept alive with magic charms, so that it might tell of hidden things.[1] While Norse poetry has also embellished this narrative, it yet contains, beyond a doubt, genuine mythical material. German folklore preserves the memory of Mime in names of places; the heroic saga knows him as the wise teacher of Wieland and Siegfried. The worship of water, and its oracular power, is met with on all sides, so that it is not surprising to find that the spirit of the well is the wise spirit. That this is also found elsewhere may be seen from Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 62 and 125, where it appears that among the Babylonians Ea, and possibly also Nabu, are divinities of the water as well as of wisdom. The pawning of Odhin's eye has been variously interpreted as symbolical of the disappearance of the sun in the water, or as representing the cosmic conception that water and sunshine together maintain the life of the world (Müllenhoff).

Entirely artificial is the scaldic myth of the poets' mead (*ódhrœrir*). Odhin as Bǫlverkr (evil-worker) gains the favor of the giant's daughter Gunnlǫdh and thus obtains possession of the mead.[2] At the conclusion of peace between the Æsir

[1] *Völuspá*, 27–29, 46; *Sigrdrífumál*, 14; *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 4. See on this myth more especially Uhland, *Schr.*, VI, 188–209; Müllenhoff, DA. V, 101–107.

[2] *Hávamál*, 102–109. The story is still further elaborated in *Bragarœdhur*, Chapters 3, 4.

and Vanir all spit into a jar. From this spittle Kvasir was made, who was so wise that he could answer every question asked him. The dwarfs Fjalar and Galar enticed Kvasir, killed him, and mixing his blood with honey made from it a drink that should make poets of all who partook of it. From the dwarfs this mead came into the hands of the giants, and thereupon Odhin got possession of it, under circumstances that are immaterial in this connection. The whole myth seems invented for the purpose of tracing the scaldic art to Odhin. There is not a single point of connection that invites comparison with the Indo-Persian sacrificial drink *soma-haoma*. Numerous *kenningar* allude to this story.

A number of other myths are told or referred to in Norse literature, many of them solely the work of scalds and mythographers. In these Odhin plays various rôles. He is the wise god, who joyfully each day, in company with Saga (Frigg?), quaffs in Sökkvabekr[1] cool draughts from a golden vessel (*Grímnismál*, 7). The Eddic poems frequently allude to Odhin's amours, his metamorphoses, and his adventurous journeys. Of his rôle in the world-drama, we shall have occasion to speak later on.

Twice Odhin is one of a triad with Hœnir and Lodhurr (Loki): at the creation of man[2] and at the killing of the otter, which they are then compelled to fill up with the fatal gold.[3]

It is noteworthy that Norse poetry has also made Odhin into a god of the heaven and of the sun. His throne Hlidhskjalf certainly points to this, perhaps also the eye that is pawned with Mimir and the ring Draupnir that the dwarfs have made for him. Of this character as god of heaven there are also traces in German mythology, so, for example, in the tribal saga of the Lombards. According to Müllenhoff it was in this character that Wodan was given Frija as wife, of old the consort of Tiu.

[1] That is *Fallbrook*, the place where a brook plunges down.
[2] *Völuspa*, 18. [3] Prose introduction to *Reginsmál*.

Odhin bears many names in Norse poetry,[1] some of which doubtless owe their origin to Christian influence. This latter is certainly the case with Alfadhir (Allfather), and the conceptions we meet of him as creator of the world and chief god.[2] His brothers Vili and Ve appear to be mythical fabrications, but Vili is already known to the scald Thjodholf (ninth century), and both occur in *Lokasenna*, 26, where they possess themselves of the person of Frigg. The story, interpreted in a euhemeristic spirit, is also found in *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 3.

The many sides of Odhin's character that we have encountered have not been reduced among the ancient Teutons to a fixed form, or been placed in an ideal light by either poetry or the plastic arts. The literary remains that have come down to us, though numerous, are only fragmentary, and while they may suggest to us correct combinations, they may also tempt us to make others that are wholly arbitrary. A talented and learned writer has made Wodan-Odhin a spiritual type, the embodiment of Teutonic philosophy, poetry, and political wisdom.[3] Ingenious though such a hypothesis may be, and however ably worked out, it is not of such a character as to throw light on the data at hand.

Donar-Thor

Donar was worshipped by all the Teutonic tribes, as is shown by the universal use of his name to designate the fifth day of the week. On Alemannic territory his name occurs on the Nordendorf Brooch. While it is not found among the Bavarians, our information concerning their gods is too meagre to allow us to draw a conclusion from mere want of evidence. Of old, Thursday bore a peculiarly sacred character, which has left numerous traces in popular belief and observance, more particularly in usages on Maundy-Thursday, Ascension day, and

[1] *Grimnismál*, 46–48. [2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 3, 20.
[3] F. Dahn, *Bausteine*, I, 148, 159.

Sacramental Thursday. On Thursday people were reluctant to perform ordinary work such as spinning and threshing, while for important matters, holding court, sowing, celebrating a wedding, Thursday was especially well suited, since Donar was the patron god of agriculture and bestowed consecration upon marriage.

Thursday is the *dies Jovis* (day of Jupiter), and yet this identification of Donar with Jupiter is not the most ancient one. In Tacitus he is Hercules, and "when about to enter battle they sing of him as the bravest of all men."[1] As a god to whom sacrifices are brought he occupies a place alongside of Mars.[2] The tribes led by Arminius assembled in a grove sacred to Hercules.[3] The thunder god is the mighty hero, whose *barditus* (beard-call) they imitate before battle.[4] Many, but not all,[5] of the Hercules of Latino-Teutonic inscriptions are to be identified with Donar; so doubtless the Hercules Magusanus of the Batavi.[6] Oak trees sacred to Donar, such as that which Boniface hewed down about the year 730 near Geismar, and numerous Donar-mountains testify to the extent of the worship of the thunder god in Germany.

Among the Frisians we also find Thuner in the name of the day of the week; among the Anglo-Saxons, Thunor in names of places as well. In Sweden, and to a still greater extent in Norway, his worship is of special importance. Adam of Bremen (IV, 26, 27; II, 60) states that in Sweden he is "the most powerful of the gods; Thor is ruler of the air and exercises control over thunder and lightning, winds and rainstorms, clear weather and crops." His image is found in the popular assembly and to him sacrifices are offered in times of pestilence and famine. That we hear little about him among the Danes may be due to the fact that the worship of the

[1] *Germania*, Chapter 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, Chapter 9.
[3] *Annals*, II, 12.
[4] Müllenhoff, DA. IV, 134–136.
[5] See above, pp. 87, 88.
[6] See above, p. 105.

thunder god is more especially characteristic of a mountainous country, although, as we have already seen, it was by no means restricted to such regions.

In Norway Thor is indigenous, as is shown by proper names, history, and numerous myths. In the medieval literature that treats of the incursions of the Norsemen, the recollection that they frequently invoked "the false god" Thor still survives. History records a number of temples and images of Thor in Norway. Among these are the temple with not less than a hundred images, which, according to a curious tradition, Hakon Jarl destroyed; the hollow image in Gudhbrandsdalir which the holy Olaf overthrew; temples at Mœri, Throndhjem (Drontheim), and elsewhere. The Thor cult was especially popular among the Norwegians who settled in Iceland. *Thor* enters into the composition of numerous proper names: Thorbjörn, Thorarinn, Thorgrimmr, Thorkell, Thorgerdhr, Bergthora, and some fifty others, borne altogether by not less than a thousand men and women, whereas other divinities occur only a few times in proper names. Of one of these emigrants it is related that he possessed a temple of Thor in Norway and zealously worshipped this god. His name was Rolf, but on account of his devotion to Thor he was called Thorolf. This Thorolf Most-beard (*Mostrarskegg*) got into a quarrel with king Harald Fairhair. "He thereupon made a great sacrifice, and asked Thor, his well-beloved friend, whether he should make peace with the king, or get him gone from out the land and seek other fortunes. But the Word showed Thorolf Iceland, and thereafter he got for himself a great ship meet for the main, and trimmed it for the Iceland faring, and had with him his kindred and his household goods; and many friends of his betook themselves to faring with him. He pulled down the temple, and had with him most of the timbers which had been therein, and mould moreover from under the stall whereon Thor had sat. And when he had sailed and had come near to the

land, Thorolf cast overboard the pillars of his high-seat, which had been in the temple, and on one of them was Thor carven; withal he spake over them, that there he would abide in Iceland, whereas Thor should let those pillars come a-land. And when he came a-land, he called the place Thorsness and the river Thorsa and built a great temple for his god." He settled there and became the godhi of the temple. The place was so holy that no shedding of blood was allowed there, and when this actually happened soon afterwards in a feud, the place where the *thing* was held was transferred to another spot.[1]

In this story, as is usual in Norway and Iceland, Thor appears as the great god, on whom all depends, and who constitutes the centre of the *thing*. In Norway he is called the *landás* (god of the country), the most honored (*mest tignadhr*) of the gods. The fact that the *Hárbardhsljódh*, as we have seen, makes him the god of the peasants does not run counter to this statement, but merely goes to show that among the people the worship of Thor retained its vitality, even at a time when among the higher classes, the jarls and scalds, the service of Odhin had attained greater prominence. The sphere of his activity is no less comprehensive than that ascribed to Odhin. In time of danger he is the protector; he relieves distress, grants favorable winds, bestows victory, consecrates marriage, and is the friend of man (*vinr verlidha*, *Hymiskvidhâ* 11). He is, furthermore, the patron god of agriculture and at Yule-tide receives sacrifices for the fruitfulness of the ensuing year. He also presides in the *thing*. Many of these functions he shares with Odhin, in so far as he has not been compelled to renounce them in Odhin's favor. A singular contrast between the two gods is found in the myth of Starkad. Odhin grants this hero splendid gifts, but Thor invariably adds something

[1] *Eyrbyggjasaga*, Chapters 3, 4, 10. The part quoted has been taken, somewhat abridged, from the translation in the *Saga Library*, II.

that sets them at naught. Odhin promises him a life that is to equal the length of three mortal lives; Thor ordains that in each of these he is to perform a *níthingsverk* (a dastard's work). Odhin gives him the choicest weapons and armor; Thor denies him the possession of landed property. Odhin accords him an abundance of chattels; Thor imposes that he should ever thirst for more. Odhin confers valor and victory upon him; Thor appoints that he is to be sorely wounded in every battle. Similarly the gift of poetry, which he receives from Odhin, is vitiated by Thor's decree that he should always forget what he had sung. Odhin determines that Starkad shall always be held in high esteem among the noblest and best, whereupon Thor adds that he is to be hated by the people. The contrast is characteristic: Thor is here the enemy of those warriors and fighters by profession of whom Odhin is the patron.

That Thor is the god of thunder does not admit of doubt. His character as such is at times revealed in an interesting way in connection with various other functions, as for example in the popular superstition current in Germany, that a thunderstorm during a wedding augurs a fruitful marriage. In the thunderstorm three elements are distinguishable: the flash (*fulgur*), the clap (*tonitrus*), and the stroke (*fulmen*), and all three may be recognized in attributes of Thor. To the flash he no doubt owes his red hair and red beard, with which he is pictured even in later times, in his visit to Olaf Tryggvason among others. To the sound made by thunder he owes his surname Hlorridhi (the roarer), and the same applies to his riding in a chariot drawn by two he-goats, from which his surnames Reidhartyr (god of the chariot) and Ǫkuthorr (riding Thor) are derived. A German conception, which explains thunder as the playing at ninepins of the gods, has been interpreted in the same light. The origin of the hammer Mjǫllnir, with which Thor crushes his enemies, and which of itself returns to the hand of the god, is doubtless to be explained

from the thunderbolt. As a symbol we find this hammer represented on all sides for the purposes of insuring good fortune, of warding off demoniac influences, of healing sickness, consecrating marriage, giving legal force to compacts, and, on tombstones, as consecrating the dead to Thor. For a similar purpose the sign of the hammer was made with the hand above the cup, as at a later period the sign of the cross. Aside from his hammer, Thor possesses two other precious objects: the iron gauntlets (*járngreipr*) and the girdle of strength (*megingjardhar*) around his loins.

Norse mythology stands alone in enumerating an extensive kindred of Thor and in relating a number of myths concerning him. The scalds make him the son of Odhin. Various personages are mentioned as his mother, — Jǫrdh, the earth, Hlodhyn, a rather obscure name, identified by some, on dubious grounds, with the Frisian Hludana,[1] and finally the equally enigmatical Fjǫrgyn. This latter name has to be considered in connection with the male Fjǫrgynn, who in *Lokasenna* 26 appears as the husband of Frigg (*i.e.* Odhin?). The clew to the interpretation of these two gods is usually sought in an etymological connection with the Lithuanian Perkunas and the Sanskrit Parjanya, a connection which is not, however, definitely established.[2] These mothers of Thor are not goddesses that have a cult, any more than his wife Sif, whose hair Loki had cut off, whereupon Thor compelled him to have the dwarfs make new golden hair for her — a *Märchen* that has been explained as referring to the golden yellow of a field of grain. As is apparent from their names, the children of Thor are mere personifications of his attributes; so his daughter Thrudhr (power), and his sons Magni[3] (power) and Modhi

[1] See above, p. 105.

[2] The most recent discussion is that by R. Much, *Der germanische Himmelsgott* (1898), pp. 16–26.

[3] The same word has been recognized in Hercules *Magusanus*. See above, p. 105.

(vehemence). Whether in the case of Sif and Thrudhr we are to have in mind the vigorous fertility of the earth, fructified by the thunder god, we do not venture to decide. As servants of Thor we find in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 44, the peasant children Thjalfi and Rǫskva. Uhland sees in these personifications of man's labor, which in the service of the god must make the earth fruitful, an interpretation that is ingenuous but of doubtful value.

We cannot here relate in detail, or analyze, the myths which the Eddic songs and the Snorra Edda narrate of Thor. References to them abound also in other Norse literature, and in Saxo as well. They tell of his fight with the giants and his journeys to Jǫtunheim, the home of the giants, in the distant northeast. Well known is the entertaining account in *Thrymskvidha* of his journey to the home of the giant Thrym, who had stolen and hidden Thor's hammer, and refused to give it up unless Freyja were given him as his wife. Thereupon Thor, disguised as Freyja, proceeds in the company of Loki to visit the giant, and to the great astonishment of the latter makes away with incredible quantities of food and drink. When the hammer is finally brought in to hallow the marriage, Thor seizes it and kills the giant. This tale doubtless conceals a genuine nature-myth, that of the thunder god, who in the spring after the long winter regains his strength. It is of course not possible to extend this interpretation to all the details. The narrative is told in a humoristic vein, and Thor assumes the character of the gluttonous giant in nursery rimes and fairy tales.

Skáldskaparmál, Chapter 1, gives a circumstantial account of Thor's combat with the giant Hrungnir, which had already furnished the subject of a song by the scald Thjodholf of Hvin. Hrungnir in his arrogance had boasted that he would carry off Walhalla to Jǫtunheim. Thor challenges him and they meet in combat. Thor hurls his hammer Mjǫllnir, the

giant his flint-stone. Hrungnir is slain, but a piece of the flint-stone penetrated the head of Thor. The magic song of Groa would have freed Thor of this flint-stone, but for joy at the return of her husband Aurvandill, which Thor announces to her, Groa forgets her song. It is clear that this myth of Hrungnir represents Thor in his character of the terrible thunder god, but there is little ground for the theory which has been advanced that it stands for the struggle with the stony ground which is everywhere the enemy of agriculture. Aurvandill, whom the Snorra Edda introduces into the story, does not belong there originally. He is a constellation, and certainly in no way connected with Thor. We cannot here discuss the possibility of a connection with Saxo's Horvendillus and the Orendel of the German minstrel poetry (*Spielmannsdichtung*). The latter is at any rate very problematical.

This narrative is followed in *Skáldskaparmál*, Chapter 2, by that of Thor's journey to the giant Geirrödhr, which like the former is greatly embellished. Loki had been taken prisoner by the giant and had been released only on condition of enticing Thor, without hammer, gauntlets, or girdle, to Geirrödhsgardhr. Thor is warned on his way thither by Gridh, who lends him her girdle, gloves, and staff. Aided by these, Thor with difficulty succeeds in crossing the stream which Gjalp, one of the two daughters of Geirrödhr, was causing to swell. Arrived at the dwelling of the giant, Gjalp and Greip attempt to crush him, with the chair in which he was seated, against the ceiling of the room, but Thor presses the seat down and breaks the backs of both Gjalp and Greip. Thor and Geirrödhr now take up the struggle, the latter flinging a red-hot iron wedge at Thor, who catches it with Gridh's iron gloves, and now throwing the wedge in his turn kills the giant. The story is an old one; it was known to scalds of the tenth century and attained wide circulation. Saxo also tells many particulars about the "sedes Geruthi." There is

no reason for recognizing in the story a journey to subterranean regions. Possibly, as in the case of the struggle with Hrungnir, the mythical kernel consists simply of two thunderstorms that meet in the mountains.[1]

Thor's journey to Hymir in quest of the kettle for brewing ale, which the Æsir needed for their feasts, and his fishing for the Midhgardh-serpent are related in *Hymiskvidha* and *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 48. In fishing for the monster, Thor uses an ox-head as bait. He succeeds in bringing the serpent to the surface, when Hymir cuts the line and the monster falls back into the sea. Though not connected originally, these two myths have been combined and elaborated in various ways. I do not venture to interpret the story as symbolical of a phenomenon of nature. The eschatological element, that Thor fights the Midhgardh-serpent in the last of all battles, is still foreign to this myth, but perhaps partly owes its origin to it.

The story of Thor's journey to Utgardhaloki is told at great length and in a charming manner.[2] He is then outside the real world, and against the illusions of demonic beings such as Skrymir and Utgardhaloki even his strength does not avail, any more than that his companions, Loki and Thjalfi, can cope, the former with Logi (fire), and the latter with Hugi (thought), which is ever fleeter than the fleetest. In vain Thor attempts to drain a drinking-horn; its end rests in the sea. It is in itself no small matter that his three draughts have caused the waters of the ocean to ebb. In vain he strives to lift the cat; it is the Midhgardh-serpent, and he succeeds in raising only one paw from the ground. In vain he wrestles with the old woman Elli: old age cannot be vanquished. I am unable to discover genuine myths in this narrative. The poet has given free rein to his imagination in his treatment of the gods, of whom the people are ever eager to tell and hear told various

[1] Weinhold, *Die Riesen des germanischen Mythus*, p. 271.
[2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 45–47.

adventures. It does not argue in favor of sagacity on the part of many mythologists that they are constantly endeavoring to explain what from the nature of the case does not require or even admit an explanation.

There are a few remaining narratives in which Thor plays an important rôle. Among these is an Eddic song, *Alvíssmál*, in which Alviss, a wise dwarf, comes up from the depths of the earth and demands Thor's daughter for a bride. Thor detains him with his questions until the dawn of day kills him. That the latter is fatal to dwarfs was a widespread popular belief. Uhland has interpreted the story as an allegory of the corn that has been sown and entrusted to the earth, but this conception is at any rate not brought out sharply.

Thor's chief rôle in numerous myths is that of the defender of Asgardh and Midhgardh against various attacks, more especially of the giants. On more than one occasion he thus saves the Æsir. He slays the giant who had built the burgh for the gods, and with whom the latter broke faith so that they would not surrender Freyja. In *Lokasenna* he is the only one who is able to silence Loki when all the other Æsir are at their wit's end at Loki's abuse.

But the majority of these myths possess little, if any, religious significance. That the scalds and mythographers assigned so important a part to Thor in the world of the gods is in keeping with the high rank which he occupied as a god of the people.

* Tiwaz (Tiu-Ziu-Týr)

The etymology of the name "Zio" (Tiu) that identifies the god with Dyâus (Zeus, Jupiter) as the old Indo-European god of the sky seemed at one time absolutely certain, but is to-day questioned by several linguistic scholars. Whether or not we accept this identification, there can be no doubt that Tiu was originally a sky god. That he frequently appears as

a god of war among the Teutonic peoples is not surprising, inasmuch as gods of war are frequently sky gods originally, as *e.g.* Ares and Mars, which names are not infrequently used as translations for Tiu.

The wide dissemination of the worship of Tiu is attested by a large body of evidence, among other things by the fact that the name of the third day of the week, Tuesday, is common to all Teutonic peoples. On this day various functions, such as the holding of assemblies, judicial procedures, weddings, etc., enjoyed the special protection of the god. But that Tiu in the first century of our era stood practically among all Teutons "in the centre of the cult," as Mogk would have us believe, seems a highly extravagant statement. We do, however, know a number of peoples and tribes that worshipped him: the Tencteri,[1] the Hermunduri,[2] the Frisians, who erected in England the altar *Marti Thingso*,[3] the Goths,[4] the distant Thulitæ,[5] and especially the Suebi or Ziuwari, in whose territory lay the Ziesburc, and whose chief tribe, the Semnones, worshipped in a sacred grove the *regnator omnium deus*[6] with human sacrifices and barbaric rites (*Germania*, Chapter 39). This god is generally taken to be Tiu. Norse mythology assigns Tyr to a subordinate place, and it has accordingly been supposed that Freyr is another name for Tiu, and represents an hypostasis of the same ancient sky god. The assumption has, however, little in its favor. The word "týr" is actually found in Old Norse as an appellative in the sense of *god*, in such compounds as "sigtýr," etc. The attempt[7] to conclude from the Irish word "diberc" (= týverk, *work for the god of war*, consisting in the razing of cloisters and the murder of the clergy) that

[1] Tacitus, *Hist.*, IV, 64.
[2] Tacitus, *Annals*, XIII, 57.
[3] See above, p. 106.
[4] Jordanes, DOAG., Chapter 5.
[5] Procopius, *B. Goth.*, II, 15.
[6] "God, the ruler of all."
[7] Zimmer, *Über die frühesten Berührungen der Iren mit den Nordgermanen*, SBA. 1891, pp. 279 ff. Compare also GGA. 1891, pp. 193 ff. Mogk, *Kelten und Nordgermanen* (*Programm*, Leipzig, 1896), p. 13, justly attacks Zimmer's position.

Vikings of the region of the Hardanger Fjord worshipped Tyr in the ninth century is certainly a mistaken one.

The opinion that Tiu was worshipped everywhere as the chief god of the Teutons is, in view of his position in the Norse pantheon, scarcely admissible. This view is, of course, closely connected with the conception of three large groups of peoples, whose eponymous heroes, Ingvaz, Ermnaz, Istvaz, have been taken to represent different forms of the sky god.[1]

Other names for Tiu are perhaps Dings (in *Marti Thingso* and *Dinsdag*, Tuesday) and, with more certainty, Er (Erchtag) among the Bavarians, and Saheuot (Anglo Saxon Seaxneat, *i.e.* sword companion) among the Saxons. The Anglo-Saxon rune ᛉ (ear) is also referred to him. Finally Iring, the Thuringian hero, who with his sword slays two kings,[2] is, according to some, likewise a form of Tiu.[3]

The numerous narratives and usages that are current in Teutonic countries in connection with the sword are doubtless in large part related to the god. Thus in the North Tyr was invoked, while his rune ↑ was engraved on the sword as an emblem of victory.[4] Ammianus Marcellinus tells us (XVII, 12) of the Quadi that "with drawn swords, which they worship as divinities, they swore that they would remain faithful." Among other German peoples as well we encounter oaths sworn by the sword. Attila conquered the world with the sacred sword of Mars, which a herd man had accidentally found, — a tale that has come down to us from a Gothic source.[5] Tacitus[6] mentions sword-dances, which, while held where all were assembled, were no doubt in honor of Tiu more especially. As to the mythological significance of these dramatic dances, which demanded great dexterity, we are entirely thrown back upon conjecture. They were probably accompanied by music,

[1] Compare p. 77.
[2] Widukind, I, 13.
[3] Compare also Heimdallr, below.
[4] *Sigrdrífumál*, 6.
[5] Jordanes, DOAG., Chapter 35.
[6] *Germania*, Chapter 24.

Numerous traces of these sword-dances are found during the Middle Ages and in later times.[1] The sword of Julius Cæsar also, which was carried by Vitellius out of the *delubrum Martis* (sanctuary of Mars) at Cologne,[2] we may regard as a sacred sword of the Ubii. Noteworthy are the observances at Valenciennes on the *jour de St. Michel*, at which the sword-players (*joueurs d'épée*) proceed to church, the sword-bearer, during the reading of the gospel, solemnly holding aloft the unsheathed sword of St. Michel. After mass the members of the association sit down to a banquet, and play war-like games.[3]

Tiu is not a prominent character in myths. Connection with the sky god has been found in the swan-knights,[4] and, with greater show of reason, in the myth of the Harlungen.[5] Müllenhoff recognizes the god in a widely ramified cluster of myths.[6] Scandinavian mythology contains, of course, a greater number of direct references to the god, but yet Tyr is not the chief figure in any one of the Eddic songs. He accompanies Thor on his journey to Hymir, and at the feast in Ægir's hall also receives his share of the abuse which Loki hurls at the gods. He is there taunted with lacking his right hand, and *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 25 and 34, relates in detail how Tyr lost this hand in his fight with the wolf Fenrir. The Æsir have bound the wolf with the fetter Gleipnir, made out of the sound caused by the footfall of cats, the beards of women, the roots of mountains, the sinews of bears, the breath of fish, and the spittle of birds. When this chain breaks, the wolf will be released and this is the sign of the end to come. Then Tyr will contend with

[1] See K. Müllenhoff, *Über den Schwerttanz* (in the *Festgaben für G. Homeyer*, 1871).

[2] Suetonius, *Vitellius*, VIII.

[3] The last two illustrations are taken from J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, I, 128.

[4] Knights who, like Lohengrin, reach the land they are to succor in a boat drawn by a swan.

[5] See above, p. 140.

[6] In the article *Frija und der Halsbandmythus*, ZfdA. XXX, 217–260.

the dog Garm (a doublet, no doubt, of the wolf), and the god and the monster will both fall.[1] A number of interpretations of Tyr's struggle with Fenrir, on the basis of nature-myths, have been proposed, the latest[2] of which regards Fenrir as a constellation. But none of these is at all satisfactory.

THE VANIR

Njǫrdhr-Nerthus, Freyr-Freyja

That the divinities here juxtaposed form a real group is certain beyond the shadow of a doubt. As indicated, the first and the second and the third and fourth are by their very names closely related. The pairs too are connected: Freyr and Freyja are the children of Njǫrdhr, and Freyr and Njǫrdhr are together invoked for a blessing at the taking of oaths and the pledging of the cup. How these divinities have come to form such a group is less clear. Has a masculine Njǫrdhr been deduced from Nerthus, as a feminine Freyja from Freyr? Whether or not they are secondary formations, these gods are certainly not abstractions; they live in both cult and myth. A number of places in Norway bear the name of Njǫrdhr, and he also was worshipped, although it is perhaps an exaggeration when an interpolated line of an Eddic song[3] credits him with a thousand sanctuaries and altars. Sacrifices were brought to Freyja also,[4] but perhaps only at a later period.

Freyr is an appellative, corresponding to Gothic *frauja*, O. H. G. *frô*, Anglo-Saxon *fréa*. A connection with the German *froh*, which would make the name signify "gladdening, fair, noble, sacred" (Jacob Grimm) cannot be maintained. The word means "lord" and was therefore originally no doubt used as epitheton of some other god. Hence nothing stands

[1] *Völuspa*, 44; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 51.
[2] E. Wilken, *Der Fenriswolf*, ZfdPh. XXVIII, 156–198; 297–348.
[3] *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 38. [4] *Hyndluljódh*, 10.

in the way of a complete identification of Freyr and Njǫrdhr. So far as the name is concerned, we might also regard him as one with the sky god Tiu, but although a few individual traits in the character of Freyr point to the sky god, he is too essentially different from the war-like Tiu-Tyr to enable us to regard the two as representing a single divinity. Freyr has more points of resemblance to a Liber than to a Mars or Jupiter.

To define any one sphere of nature as the special field of activity of the Vanir is on the whole impossible without a show of arbitrariness. Nerthus is the *terra mater*[1]; Njǫrdhr usually god of the sea; he dwells in Noatun (the place of ships).[2] In the case of Freyr, some features point to heavenly light, others to earthly fruitfulness. It is not possible, therefore, to regard the whole group simply as gods of the air.

The ethnic basis of the cult of these gods is more firmly established. For the festival of Nerthus the seven Ingævonic peoples assemble; Freyr is identified with the tribal progenitor Ingv (Ingvifreyr, Ingunarfreyr); the Ynglingen are his descendants,[3] and he is also mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon genealogical tables. There is, accordingly, no possibility of regarding the Vanir as Slavic or foreign divinities. They are truly Teutonic, and the gods of the Ingævonic amphictyony. The island where the festival of Nerthus was celebrated was probably Seeland. We may assume then that this was also the home of the Vanir, and that from there they came to Sweden, either by way of Scania or through intercourse over the sea. While Freyr is preëminently the *Sviagodh* (god of the Swedes), he was not originally indigenous in Sweden, as is shown by the saga of king Hadding, who is said to have introduced the *fröblót* (sacrifice to Freyr) at Upsala.[4] The correspondence between the festival of Nerthus described by Tacitus and the procession of Freyr from Upsala at the close of winter is a

[1] "Mother Earth."
[2] *Thrymskvidha*, 22; *Grímnismál*, 16, etc.
[3] *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 12.
[4] Saxo, H.D., p. 50.

very striking one. His wagon was accompanied by a priestess who figured as his wife, a circumstance which a Norwegian exile knew how to turn to good account, as we learn from a characteristic story in the longer *Olaf Tryggvason Saga*, Chapter 173. From Sweden the worship of Freyr came to Norway, more especially to the region of Throndhjem, and from there to Iceland. In various sagas[1] we meet with *Freysgodhar* (priests of Freyr), with sacrifices of bulls brought to Freyr, with his image on an amulet, with a stallion Freysfaxi, on which no one was allowed to ride against its will, and the like.

While Freyr was thus introduced into Sweden and Norway from the South, his worship does not appear to have come into collision with the indigenous cult of Thor. The case seems to have been different with the more recent religion of Odhin, which was also introduced from the South. With considerable probability we conclude, from the myth of the war between the Æsir and Vanir, that their respective adherents stood violently opposed to each other. In illustration we cite *Völuspa*, 21–24:

That I remember as first of the world-wars, when Gullveig they thrust with spears and in Har's hall burnt her; thrice burnt her, the thrice born, oft and not seldom, and yet she still lives.

Heidhr they called her, wheresoever she came to a house, the *vǫlva* prophetic. She used witchcraft wherever she could, distracted men's minds by her magic, practised sorcery; she was ever the delight of evil women.

Then went all the rulers to their judgment-seats, the most holy gods, and held counsel, whether the Æsir should pay tribute, or all the gods should share the sacrifices.

Odhin hurled spears and shot into the host; that also happened in the first of the world-wars. Broken was the wall of the burgh of the Æsir. The valiant Vanir were able to tramp over the plains.

Gullveig, who is evidently the queen of the Vanir, was accordingly shamefully maltreated with spears and fire in the

[1] *Glumsaga*, Chapters 9, 26; *Vatnsdœlasaga*, Chapter 10; *Hrafnkelssaga*, Chapter 4; etc.

hall of Har (Odhin); she was called Heidhr, the sorceress, versed in all manner of magic practices. The Vanir remained victors in the struggle that ensued, and the Æsir took counsel whether they should pay the Vanir tribute or should allow them to share the sacrifices in common. The latter seems to have been the result of their deliberations, and from that time on, the two, Æsir and Vanir, stand side by side in the cult. Elsewhere we read that on both sides a god was given as a hostage, Njǫrdhr to the Æsir, and Hœnir, accompanied by the wise Mimir, to the Vanir.[1] The antithesis between the two groups was evidently felt, and from this we may conclude, with a considerable degree of probability, that a clash took place between the followers of the two parties. Weinhold, however, is hardly justified in assigning a date to this "cult-war" ("before A.D. 800") as a definite historical fact.

When we inquire into the meaning of this antithesis, it is to be noted that in *Völuspa*, Gullveig-Heidhr and in the Ynglinga Saga, Freyja are accused of practising evil arts of magic. This Gullveig-Heidhr-Freyja is the Vanir-goddess whose tears are gold: the Vanir are the wealthy gods of trade and commerce. Attention has been called to the fact that in the heroic saga as well, alluring gold brings danger and death to its possessors (Hreidmar, Fafnir, Regin, Sigurd). The present myth has therefore been supposed to contain the ethical thought that the religion of Odhin is hostile to the cult of the Vanir on account of the magic power of gold. While it is possible that such a conception is present in the myth, we should be on our guard against treating it as an established fact. In *Völuspa*, 7, the Æsir are in the Golden Age themselves occupied with gold, and the stricter religion of Odhin as opposed to the more luxurious cult of the Vanir is, after all, based merely on conjecture.

Nor is it feasible to regard the Vanir war as a nature-myth. The very fact that we were unable to point to either light or

[1] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 23; *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 4.

air or any one sphere of nature as their special field of activity in itself precludes such an interpretation. We must, accordingly, be content with recognizing an ethnic difference between Æsir and Vanir. The material at our disposal is too scanty to enable us to ascertain their ethical or physical significance.

Another ethnic difference, but one that has struck less deep a root in the cult, may be recognized in the marriage of Njǫrdhr with the Finnish Skadhi.[1] The Æsir owed her an expiation for the death of her father Thjazi, and she was accordingly to marry one of the Æsir, but was permitted to see only their feet in making a choice. She chose Njǫrdhr, mistaking him for Baldr. The marriage was not a happy one. Skadhi did not thrive at Noatun, where the screeching of the birds awakened her in the morning, and Njǫrdhr did not keep his agreement of living nine nights in Thrymheim in the mountains, in the midst of the howling wolves. Some strophes relating an altercation between them, in dialogue form, may be found in *Gylfaginning*.

There are in the cult of Freyr a few rude primitive traits that are at times too little regarded in a treatment of the god. In the first place we read in Adam of Bremen, IV, 26: "Freyr (Fricco) bestows peace and joy upon mankind; his image they fashion with a large *membrum virile*." He is the god of fruitfulness in every sense. For the vegetable kingdom this is indicated by the processions in spring, for the animal world by the symbol of the *phallus*. In this connection the little statuettes of *Manneke-pis* and the processions of *Derk met den beer*, are frequently drawn upon for illustration,[2] but while these may possibly represent parallels, it is not at all likely that they have been derived from the god Freyr.

A second trait is that the Vanir are accused of marriage with sisters, which was regarded with abhorrence by the

[1] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 23; *Bragarœdhur*, Chapter 2.
[2] Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, I, 107.

Æsir.[1] In addition we may mention the boar that was consecrated to Freyr, and by which on the eve of Yule-tide, in the hall, the god was invoked for the fruitfulness of the year, and vows made to him over the cup.[2] In connection with this the "figures of wild boars," which according to Tacitus[3] are the "token of superstition" of the Æstii, are sometimes cited, and it is at least not impossible that here, on the very border of the territory actually known to him, Tacitus ascribes to the Balts what really belonged to the Ingævonic Teutons. In Norse mythology the wagon of Freyr is drawn by the boar Gullinbursti ("with golden bristles").

That Freyr is the god of fruitfulness, love, prosperity, and peace is also shown by the well-known Frodhi-peace,[4] and several details of Saxo's accounts of kings that were called Frotho may perhaps be explained as due to a euhemeristic conception of the god. In the songs of the Edda and in the Snorra Edda, his character is sketched with considerable detail.[5] He dwells in Alfheim among the light-elves. His treasures consist of the ship Skidhbladhnir and the boar Gullinbursti. Myths in which he figures are not numerous. Incidentally we learn that with bare fist he laid low the giant Beli ("the roarer"), perhaps a demon representing the storms of winter. The most circumstantial account is that of the story of Freyr and Gerdhr, told in one of the most attractive of the Eddic songs.[6] From Odhin's high-seat Hlidhskjalf Freyr was gazing over the world and caught sight of the fair young giantess Gerdhr. He sent his servant Skirnir to her, who with mighty threats prevailed upon the unwilling fair one, after nine nights, to surrender herself to Freyr in the flowery grove Barri. The chief meaning of this myth is doubtless the awakening of the earth in spring,

[1] *Lokasenna*, 32, 36.
[2] *Hervararsaga*, Chapter 14.
[3] *Germania*, Chapter 45.
[4] See p. 165.
[5] *Skírnismál*; *Grímnismál*, 5, 43; *Lokasenna*, 35–37, 42–44; *Hyndluljódh*, 31; *Sigurdharkvidha*, 24; *Gylfaginning*, 24, 34, 37–43, 49, 51; *Skáldskaparmál*, 3.
[6] *Skírnismál*.

although not all details, of course, are transferable. Similarly, the spring processions of Freyr are connected with the opening of the new season. One might be tempted to find a correspondence between the myth of Njǫrdhr and Skadhi and that of Freyr and Gerdhr: in both we have the unwilling, resisting giant's daughter and the period of nine days. The figure of Gerdhr does not, however, have the same ethnic background as that of the Finnish Skadhi. In this myth of Skirnisfǫr (Skirnir's journey) one more feature remains to be noted: Freyr has entrusted his sword to his servant, and for that very reason he is in the last combat without a weapon of defense against the fire-demon Surtr, and falls before the latter.

In various Christian saints, traits of Freyr are recognizable, *e.g.* in St. Andrew, the patron saint of marriage, and in Sweden in St. Stephanus, the patron saint of the fruitfulness of woman and of the soil.

In the Scandinavian North, Freyr was certainly one of the chief gods in respect to cult. In his case no exuberant growth of poetic myths or popular stories make us lose sight, as with Odhin and Thor, of the high place which he occupied in the cult.

Baldr

The myths connected with Baldr are many and varied, but he has left few traces in the cult. The later *Fridhthjofssaga* alone, which dates from the fourteenth century, mentions, without historical basis, a large temple at Baldrshag. The name Baldr characterizes him as a god of light. With it are to be compared Bældæg, in Anglo-Saxon genealogies the son of Woden, the appellative *bealdor* (prince), and the Old High German name Paltar. The occurrence of the name in the second Merseburg Charm we have already discussed,[1] and this evidence in favor of a German Balder is further strengthened

[1] See p. 128.

by names of places, such as Pfolsau, Pholesbrunno, etc., and possibly also by the Pulletag (the second of May). Far more numerous are similar evidences in Denmark: Baldersbrönd near Roeskilde, in Seeland, where Baldr caused water to gush forth out of the ground for exhausted warriors; Baldrshöje where he lies buried; and throughout the entire North the *baldrsbrá* (*supercilium Balderi*),[1] the plant that is named after the white god.[2] In the Danish folklore collected by J. M. Thiele[3] we repeatedly meet with Baldr, and it seems likely that Denmark is his original home. It is there that he most frequently occurs in saga and folklore, although it is not impossible that these sagas contain Norwegian elements.

Saxo Grammaticus, in the third book of his *Historia Danica*, has given a very circumstantial account of this saga and has embellished it by the addition of a number of adventures. In Saxo the leading character is Hotherus, the son of a Swedish king, who was enamoured of the beautiful Nanna, daughter of the Norwegian king Gevarus. Inasmuch as the god or demigod Balderus was also desirous of winning the favor of the maiden, a struggle ensues between them, in which after fortune had favored now this side, now that, Hotherus, aided by the counsel of the forest maidens, the possession of Miming's sword with which alone Baldr can be wounded, and of the ring that bestows riches, finally remains victor. Baldr's death does not remain unavenged. With Rinda, Odhin begets another son, Bous, who slays Hotherus, but is himself also slain. A number of other more or less extraneous features have been incorporated into this account: the magic food which increases the strength of Baldr, but is also bestowed by the Walkyries upon Hotherus; the dream in which Hel appears to the wounded Baldr and foretells that he will soon rest in her arms; and the scene of the battle in which Odhin and Thor

[1] "Baldr's eyebrow." [2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 22.
[3] *Danske Folkesagn*, II, 341.

also take part. While it is extremely difficult to separate the adventitious from the genuine kernel, it does not seem to me to admit of the least doubt that such a genuine mythical kernel exists, and that we are here not dealing merely, as the euhemeristic interpretation would have it, with an heroic adventure of love quarrel and combat.

In the Eddic songs and in the Snorra Edda the myth of Baldr is very prominent. As early as the tenth century it was known to the scalds Kormakr and Vetrlidhi, and in the *Húsdrápa* which Ulfr Uggason composed on the scenes depicted in an Icelandic hall, the story of Baldr plays a prominent part; he is represented as lying on the funeral pyre, while the giantess Hyrrokin is pushing off the ship that is to carry the body to sea, a scene that is also described in detail in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 49.

From the above remarks it follows that the myth of Baldr is at any rate not the product of the Eddic poets and late mythographers. It is certain, moreover, that the detailed account of Snorri contains a number of features not implied in the Eddic poem, *Vegtamskvidha* (*Baldrs Draumar*). Baldr is the son of Odhin and Frigg, the white, the wise god, the most beloved among the Æsir. His hall is situated in Breidhablik:

> In that land,
> In which I know exist
> The fewest crimes.[1]

A gloomy fate overhangs him, and he is tormented by evil dreams. Odhin, disguised as Vegtam (way-wise man), thereupon betakes himself to a *vǫlva* to obtain information concerning this ill-boding future. Here he learns that Baldr's place in Hel is already prepared for him; Hǫdhr is to kill him with the mistletoe, but Vali is to avenge him. In an epitomized form we also possess this story in *Völuspa*, 32–34:

[1] *Grímnismál*, 12 (Thorpe).

I saw for Baldr,
the blood-stained god,
The son of Odhin,
fate's decision.
Full grown there towered,
high on the turf,
Matchless and slender,
the mistletoe.

From this selfsame shrub,
that seemed so slender,
Came the fatal shaft:
Hǫdhr shot it.

Baldr's brother
was born full soon;
One night old,
battled Odhin's son.

Hands he ne'er washed,
head he ne'er kempt,
Until Baldr's foe
he 'd borne to the pyre.
But Frigg bewept,
in Fensalir,
The woe of Walhalla.
Wot ye yet, or what?

The punishment of Loki, which is described in the strophes that immediately follow, may, but need not necessarily, be brought into connection with what precedes. *Lokasenna*, 28, and *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 49, show that Loki is the one who is really guilty of Baldr's death. We are there told that Frigg, subsequent to Baldr's evil dreams, had put all objects under oath not to harm Baldr. On the *thing* the gods, certain not to hurt him, began in jest to throw and shoot all kinds of missiles at Baldr; nothing could hit him. Now Loki had learned from Frigg that the insignificant mistletoe (*mistilteinn*) had not been put under oath, and he now put this mistletoe as an arrow in the hand of the blind Hǫdhr, who shot Baldr dead with it. All the gods wept, but to no avail. The burial on the ship, which serves at the same time as a funeral pyre, is described in detail. The Æsir thereupon send Hermodhr, the son of Odhin, to Hel, and he returns with the promise that Baldr shall return in case all objects, animate as well as inanimate, weep for him. The Æsir prevail upon all objects to do so; the tears are universal.[1] Thǫkt alone, the giantess of the cave in the rocks, — Loki in

[1] "As you yourself must have seen that all these things weep when they are brought from a cold place into a hot one." Thus Snorri interprets *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 49.

disguise, — will not weep and thus prevents the return of the god. She says: "Neither living nor dead was he of any use to me. Let Hel hold what it has."

It is evident that we are here dealing with a myth, not in the process of growth, but in that of disintegration. Baldr is originally one of those invulnerable gods or heroes of whom Achilles and Siegfried are types. For the invulnerability the Norse account has substituted the oath not to harm him. The *mistilteinn* has taken the place of Miming's sword and has thus become a *kenning* for sword. The conceptions and usages attaching to the mistletoe are of secondary importance. In respect to both the invulnerability and the sword, Saxo's account has preserved the original form.

As in the case of other myths, any attempt to explain the individual features of the myth of Baldr would prove abortive. Its chief content is doubtless the vanishing of the light of summer. But the myth has undergone a twofold development. In the first place, the god of physical light has become the embodiment of the morally pure and innocent. On the other hand, the myth of the year has, even in the Eddic poems, become the myth of the world. The death of Baldr inflicts great loss and injury on the company of the gods, and thus forms the ominous prelude to the impending destruction of the world. It was this latter aspect in which the myth was viewed on that boundary line of the pagan and Christian ages in which *Völuspa* was composed.[1]

Forsete (Fosite)

Forsete is usually connected with Baldr, who, according to *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 32, is his father. He inhabits the resplendent heavenly hall Glitnir, "where he allays every strife."[2] Aside from this, and a few names of places in Norway, little

[1] See p. 202.

[2] *Grímnismál*, 15.

mention is made of him in the Scandinavian North. He is a Frisian god, who has his seat on Helgoland. He probably came to the North during the Viking period and was there connected with Baldr, to whom he otherwise bears little resemblance. The name Fosite may be an epitheton, possibly of Wodan or of Tiu (the Mars Thingsus of the Frisian *cuneus* in England has been compared with him), less likely of Donar.

The accounts furnished by the *Vitæ* of the missionaries concerning the land of Fosite have already been touched upon.[1] On this inhospitable island, where the tempest so frequently cast the shipwrecked mariner, were the sacred well, the cattle, and the temples of the god. Whosoever profaned these was offered up by the king as a sacrifice to the god. Helgoland, just as Seeland, was probably the centre of an amphictyony. From this latter, and from the line cited above from *Grímnismál*, we may infer that Fosite was among the Frisians regarded as the god of justice.

Heimdallr

Heimdallr we know only from Norse literature; in the cult he is not met with at all, in proper names only a few times, in Norway. Of a magic song (*Heimdallargaldr*) dealing with this god, *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 27, quotes a few lines. It might seem, therefore, that he is to be regarded as a creation of the poetry of the scalds, and yet such a conclusion would be false. Heimdallr, who dwells in Himinbjǫrg (the mountain of heaven),[2] was a genuine and powerful deity.

He is the guardian of the gods and sits at the edge of heaven to guard the bridge against the mountain giants. He requires less sleep than a bird, and both by day and night can see a distance of one hundred miles. He is, moreover, the possessor of the *Gjallarhorn* (loud-resounding horn), whose sound is heard throughout the universe, and which lies hidden under

[1] See p. 122.

[2] *Grímnismál*, 13.

the world-tree until the final catastrophe.[1] He has nine mothers, daughters of Ægir,[2] whose names are suggestive of the waves of the sea.

The chief myth connected with Heimdallr is that of his struggle with Loki for the possession of the precious necklace Brisingamen, for which they fight on the Singa-stone, in the form of seals. The *Húsdrápa* of Ulfr Uggason shows that this incident also received pictorial treatment. With great learning and ingenuity, Müllenhoff has shown the mythological connection of this struggle with the *Hjadhningavíg* of the Hilde-Kudrun Saga,[3] has interpreted the myth as symbolizing the appearance of the morning dawn on the eastern horizon, and has traced its wide ramifications in Teutonic saga.[4] In the *kenningar* of the scalds the sword is frequently called *Heimdalar hǫfudh* (the head of Heimdallr). In *Rígsthula*, under the name of Rig (= *king* in Keltic), he begets by three women, at whose houses he puts up, Thræll (thrall), Karl (churl), and Jarl (earl), the progenitors of the serfs, the freemen, and the nobles.

The antithesis between Heimdallr and Loki has been most poetically expressed by Uhland: "Heimdallr, who is the dawn and the beginning of all things; whose sword is Hǫfudh (the beginning); who hears grass and wool grow; from whose keen senses the most inaudible processes of growth do not escape."[5]

Loki

No matter how one groups or interprets the data at hand, Loki is and remains the great riddle of Teutonic mythology. In the first place, the question presents itself, whether he is a

[1] *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 27, 51; *Vǫluspa*, 27, 46.
[2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 27; *Hyndluljódh*, 36–40.
[3] See p. 176.
[4] Delling, the father of day (*Vafthrúdhnismál*, 25; *Hávamál*, 159; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 10), and even Iring, the Thuringian *armiger regalis* (Widukind, *Res Gestae*, I, 13), have by Müllenhoff been identified with Heimdallr.
[5] *Schriften*, VI, 14.

genuine god or one fabricated by scalds and mythographers. He occurs nowhere in the cult. He is exclusively Scandinavian, and the parallels that have been drawn between him and figures from the German heroic saga are extremely dubious. An attempt has been made to identify him with Requalivahanus (*i.e.* darkness), a god whose name occurs on an inscription of the second century, discovered near Cologne, but again on insufficient grounds. In the North his memory is kept alive in a number of proverbial expressions. When the fire crackles, people say, "Loki is beating his children"; when in the summer the hot air is vibrating, "Loki is driving his goats out to pasture"[1]; listening to lies is called "listening to Loki's adventures"; when the sun draws water "Loki is drinking"; "Loki's oats" is a noxious weed; the star Sirius is called Lokabrenna, etc. But such sayings do not by any means prove the ancient heathen origin of the god: the later Norse mythology may as well have given them currency among the people.

Loki's name also seems too abstract to be regarded as that of an original nature-deity; it signifies "the closer." Weinhold has accordingly attempted to find another name for him in Gothic *Aúhns*, Old Norse *Ón* (*ofan*, oven), thus identifying him with Agni as god of the fire-hearth, but no evidence has been adduced in support of this view. The names of Loki's kindred are likewise abstract. His father is Farbauti, the dangerously striking one, *i.e.* the storm, or the ferryman, the oarsman (?);[2] his mother is Nal, the fir tree, or Laufey, the leafy isle. The latter appellation has been interpreted as referring to Iceland, formerly thickly wooded, which with its boiling and foaming waters, its subterranean fire, its vapors, and its lava streams would accordingly be the home of Loki, who would through this very fact be shown to be of later origin. On the other hand, Loki is already found in the oldest *kenningar*,[3]

[1] In Jutland. [2] Uhland. [3] See CPB. II, 471.

and the rôle he plays in the oldest nature-myths is too important to regard this companion and opponent of Odhin and Thor as an entirely fictitious god.

If we ask what element of nature he originally represents, the answer is equally uncertain. He is one of the Æsir, although his residence is not mentioned among the heavenly mansions in *Grímnismál*. He likewise belongs to the race of the giants, and is connected with the elves. His other, probably older, names, Loptr and Lodhurr, signify 'the air' or 'the hot air,' and the fire-demon Logi is a doublet of Loki. According to *Lokasenna*, 23, he dwelt for eight winters underground, doing service as milkmaid, and had there even given birth to children, a reference which is usually brought into connection with subterranean fire. We find him associated with the water as well: the sea-monster, the Midhgardh-serpent, is, like Hel and the Fenris-wolf, his progeny, and a popular song current in the Faroe Islands also mentions the water as his element, although not much nature-mythology can be deduced from a fairy tale in which the three gods, Odhin, Hœnir, and Loki hide a peasant's son from a giant, by transforming him, in turn, into a grain of barley, a swan feather, and a grain in the mouth of a fish.[1] If, finally, he also lies concealed behind Utgardhaloki, he would occur in that story — summarized above under the head of Thor — in three forms, including those of Loki and Logi.

Especially frequent are Loki's changes of shape. As a mare he entices the stallion Svadhilfari, which was helping to build the gigantic burgh for the gods, and subsequently gives birth to the steed Sleipnir.[2] He frequently flies through the air, and arrayed in Freyja's falcon plumage brings back Idhunn from Thjazi's dwelling.[3] Similarly, he came flying to the giant Geirrödhr in the shape of a falcon.[4] He readily changes himself

[1] Uhland, *Schriften*, VI, 193.
[2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 42.
[3] *Bragarœdhur*, Chapter 1.
[4] *Skáldskaparmál*, Chapter 2.

into a fish,[1] or into a fly, and thus gains entrance to Freyja's chamber, and steals her necklace.[2] These various metamorphoses, it will be noticed, bring him into connection with all the elements.

Equally difficult is the third phase of the problem, namely: why Loki should at one time be classed among the good gods, as companion of the Æsir, and then again as their enemy, among the dangerous, hostile beings. It is not clear when, where, and why Loki has been diabolified. His relationship to the giants is probably a fabrication of Scandinavian mythology, due to this antithesis to the Æsir. His two-sidedness is doubtless best explained from his nature, but here again it is impossible to advance beyond more or less probable conjectures. The fire god can as well give rise to beneficent warmth as to consuming flames. The "closer" can make an end to the good as well as to the bad; both deliver up Idhunn to the giant Thjazi, and bring her back again; alike struggle with Heimdallr and aid Thor in recovering his hammer from the giant Thrym. But in the main this "end" inspires fear. Loki accordingly signifies "the approaching end of things," "the goal and limits of divine power in time and space."[3] Hence also he plays the chief rôle in the final downfall of the world. Christian influence in the so-called diabolification of Loki is in any case not to be rated very high. There is no apparent reason why he, more than any other of the "false gods," should have been transformed into an evil spirit. The conception of a conflict in nature is an old and thoroughly mythical motif. The sky god, the thunder god, and the fire god are all capable of generating life as well as of bringing death. The powers and elements of nature are engaged in a continuous struggle: Heimdallr and Loki stand opposed. The character that the Norse poets and story-tellers have

[1] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 50. [2] *Sǫrlaþáttr*, Chapter 1
[3] Uhland, *Schriften*, VI, 14

assigned to Loki, as that of the shrewd companion, who is never at a loss, devises all manner of tricks, and brings disgrace and mockery upon the gods, does not, after all, lie outside the line of purely pagan development such as we have been able to trace elsewhere.

The myths of Loki that are actually related, or to which allusion is made, are very numerous. Those concerning which we are not informed in detail are: his sojourn under ground;[1] his intimacy with several goddesses;[2] and his eating a woman's heart, through which he gives birth to the monsters that are accounted his progeny.[3] Of several of his myths we have circumstantial accounts, narrated more or less after the manner of the fairy tale. Thus he delivered Idhunn into the hands of Thjazi, and brought her back again changed into the form of a nut; by an obscene exhibition he made Skadhi laugh; he had the dwarfs make Sif's golden hair and two precious jewels; he accompanied and aided Thor on his journey to Thrym and to Utgardhaloki, and is mentioned as aiding the Æsir on various other occasions. The greater part of these narratives have already been treated in another connection.

A separate class is formed by those myths in which Loki together with Odhin and Hœnir constitute a triad, which has been characterized as symbolizing "the rushing wind, the speeding clouds, and invigorating warmth."[4] The first men were formed from trees, and upon these Odhin bestowed breath, Hœnir the soul, Lodhurr warmth and color.[5] The same three, when making a joint tour, arrive at the abode of Hreidmar, and kill Ottr, whereupon Loki succeeds in obtaining from the dwarf Andvari the gold that is to serve as expiation.[6] Odhin and Loki are closely connected; they had mixed blood, and sworn eternal brotherhood.[7] As a hostile power Loki

[1] *Lokasenna*, 23.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Hyndluljódh*, 43.
[4] Hoffory, *Eddastudien*, p. 117.
[5] *Völuspa*, 18.
[6] *Reginsmál; Skáldskaparmál*, Chapter 4.
[7] *Lokasenna*, 9.

appears in the myth of the necklace, which he purloins from Freyja, and in the struggle with Heimdallr. Mitothinus (*contra-Odhin*) mentioned by Saxo (I, 43) as having in Odhin's absence led the people astray, and as being *celeber praestigiis*,[1] has also been identified with Loki. In *Lokasenna* Loki reviles all the gods and goddesses at the feast of Ægir, and yields to Thor alone. He is captured and chained, and Skadhi fastens a snake above him, whose venom drips down upon his face. Loki's wife, Sigyn, contrives to catch the venom in a vessel, and only when this vessel becomes full and has to be emptied does a drop fall upon Loki, whose frightful convulsions then cause the earth to quake.

In Norse eschatology Loki is throughout conceived of as an inimical force. It was he who had caused Baldr to perish, although he is not mentioned by Saxo in connection with the struggle between Hotherus and Balderus. At the final catastrophe he is the leader of the creatures from Hel, who advance against the Æsir on the ship Naglfar. The monsters, Hel, the Fenris-wolf, who will then be released and course about, and the Midhgardh-serpent, are his progeny, begotten by Angrbodha.[2] While these eschatological myths belong to the last period of myth-development, they are yet not to be regarded as mere story and fiction. It is certain, at any rate, that they are interwoven with genuine mythical material.

The character of Loki is one of the most completely developed among the gods of Scandinavian mythology. He is the personification of shrewdness and cunning, of adroitness and nimbleness, "the true impersonation," as Mogk puts it, "of a *thulr* who takes delight in snapping his fingers at the company round about him, but who always knows how to escape the net that is spread for him." The tragic mood that is characteristic of the eschatology does not find a sufficient basis in the

[1] "Celebrated for his juggling tricks."
[2] *Völuspa*, 51; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 51.

character of the gods, who — Loki as well as the others — are, after all, too little cognizant of moral distinctions.

Hœnir

The lesser gods, whom we know from Scandinavian mythology alone, and who do not occupy a place in the cult, now demand our attention. The question presents itself whether they owe their existence solely to the scalds and mythographers, or whether they contain a genuine kernel representative of myths of nature. In the majority of instances this latter possibility must doubtless be reckoned with. Hœnir we have already met in the company of Odhin and Lodhurr.[1] As hostage among the Vanir [2] he cuts a sorry figure. Though stalwart in form and fair of face, he is dull in mind. When his opinion is asked, he invariably replies, "Let others give counsel," so that it is absolutely necessary that the wise Mimir should accompany him.[3] When the world is restored Hœnir will be one of the gods that return.[4]

This is about the extent of the information that we possess concerning this god, the fleet, long-footed Ás, as he is called. He has been regarded as a sun god (Weinhold, Mogk), the swan god, *i.e.* sky god (Hoffory), a water god (Müllenhoff), forest god (Kauffmann), cloud god (Roediger, and in part Golther), the Singer (Uhland, Detter, Heinzel), and as the Biblical Henoch (E. H. Meyer). His name and nature are obscure.

Ullr

Ullr is undoubtedly a genuine god, who was worshipped in Sweden, where his memory is perpetuated in a number of names of places. Oaths, furthermore, were sworn by Ullr's

1 *Völuspa*, 18; *Reginsmál.*
2 *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 23.
3 *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 4.
4 *Völuspa*, 63.

ring.[1] He is the son of Sif, and stepson of Thor, and dwells in Ydalir (yew-tree valley),[2] where the wood grows out of which bows are made. He occupies a place of honor among the Æsir, and is invoked in single combats.[3] In the *kenningar* he is the god of the bow, shield, hunt, and skates. He has also been identified with Holler, the *inferni dominus*,[4] whom the Frisians[5] worshipped, but this is uncertain; it would constitute the only trace of the god outside of Scandinavia. He is identical with Ollerus in Saxo (III, 130), who takes advantage of Odhin's absence, and at the return of the god flees to Sweden on a bone (*osse*, erroneously for *skate?*). Ullr is without doubt an ancient Swedish deity.

Vidharr

Vidharr, who rides about on his steed in Vidhi,[6] the wide grassy plain, is the son of Odhin and the giantess Gridh. He is surnamed rather the "silent god," and almost equals Thor in strength, so that the Æsir when in peril largely rely upon him.[7] At Ægir's feast he gives way to Loki and is the only one of the gods who escapes Loki's abuse.[8] At the final catastrophe he avenges his father Odhin and slays the Fenris-wolf, whose jaw he rends open with a thick shoe, or an iron shoe, or a shoe made out of pieces of leather that have been cast aside. This last feature, which indicates the way in which men can assist the gods in this final struggle, viz. by casting aside such scraps of leather, is doubtless of more recent date. Together with Vali, Vidharr returns to the regenerated world.[9] On the whole,

1 *Atlakvidha*, 31.
2 *Grímnismál*, 5.
3 *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 31.
4 "Lord of the lower world."
5 Hamconius, *Frisia*, p. 77, in Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, I, 204.
6 *Grímnismál*, 17.
7 *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 29.
8 *Lokasenna*.
9 On Vidharr, see *Völuspa*, 54, — an interpolated strophe, according to Müllenhoff; *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 51; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 51.

he is a god that is of importance only from the side of eschatology, and whose mythical character is very problematical.

Vali

Like Vidharr, Vali is not met with in the cult. His rôle in the myth of Baldr is, however, of some importance. Vali is the son of Odhin and Rindr, and not to be confounded with a son of Loki of identical name, but perhaps to be identified with Ran, whose mother, Rindr, chanted magic songs to him.[1] Immediately after his birth, with uncombed hair and unwashed hands, Vali avenges his brother's death, and returns to the regenerated world.[2] He is also called Ali[3] and Bous.[4]

Bragi

Bragi Boddason was undoubtedly a scald of the ninth century, the oldest scald of whom some fragments have been preserved. Aside from these, in *Ragnarsdrápa*, *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 1, quotes a few lines of his poetry. In the *Eiriksmál* and the *Hákonarmál*, which is dependent upon the *Eiriksmál*, he is already mentioned as Odhin's favorite scald and counsellor in Walhalla.

From this historical Bragi we distinguish Bragi, the god of poetry. It is not likely that this latter is merely the apotheosis of the scald Bragi. Bragi, the god of poetry, is the husband of Idhunn. In *Lokasenna* he wishes to expel Loki, but creates in the end the impression of being afraid rather than angry. Both in *Bragarœdhur* and in *Skáldskaparmál* he is the narrator, and in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 26, he is characterized as a god who excels in wisdom and eloquence. Not everywhere where Bragi is mentioned is it clear whether the god or the

[1] *Grógaldr*, 6.
[2] *Völuspa*, 33; *Baldrs Drauma*, 11; *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 51; *Hyndluljódh*, 30; *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 30, 53.
[3] *Gylfaginning*.
[4] Saxo, HD. III, 131.

scald is meant, as, *e.g.* in *Grimnismál*, 44, and *Sigrdrífumál*, 16. As god of poetry, Bragi discharges a function which had in reality been already assigned to Odhin. The vows made by Bragi's cup show, however, that he was also conceived of as a separate personality. *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 40, tells us that a new king did not ascend the high-seat of his father in the hall until Bragi's cup had been handed him, he had made a pledge by it, and had drained it.

In bringing our survey of the gods to a close, a few other names may be mentioned in passing. Hǫdhr is the blind god who slays Baldr. Hermodhr, the son of Odhin, is sent to Hel to fetch Baldr back again. Modhi and Magni, sons of Thor, survive the world conflagration and obtain their father's hammer. Vili and Ve are brothers of Odhin, who, in his absence, take Frigg unto themselves.[1] Har, Jafnhar, and Thridhi, of *Gylfaginning*, possibly owe their origin to the Christian trinity. None of these gods are found in the cult; most, if not all of them, are the creation of scalds and mythographers.

Goddesses

Of the goddesses, Jacob Grimm says: "They are thought of chiefly as *divine mothers who travel round and visit houses*, from whom the human race learns the occupations and arts of housekeeping and husbandry: *spinning*, *weaving*, *tending the hearth*, *sowing and reaping*."[2] The attempt to thus unite the German goddesses in one general definition is by no means preposterous. They are individualized to a far less degree than the gods, and we frequently are at a loss to determine whether we are dealing with a surname or attribute of another goddess, or with an independent personage. Both the identification and the differentiation of the various characters present

[1] *Lokasenna*, 26; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 6; *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 33.
[2] Grimm, DM.[4] I, 207.

great difficulties. In the case of some goddesses, the telluric and chthonic character is unmistakable, as indeed Mother Earth is by many, though by no means all, peoples conceived of as feminine. There are in Teutonic mythology only few traces, however, of the cosmogonic marriage between heaven and earth, and they are confined to such Norse myths as that of Freyr and Gerdhr, if these may be cited in this connection. We shall probably never succeed in tracing the origin of all the Teutonic goddesses to one common natural element.

Refraining, therefore, from speculations of a general character, we proceed to a consideration of the individual goddesses, and treat first of all those mentioned by Tacitus: Nerthus, Isis, Tamfana, and Baduhenna.

Nerthus was worshipped by seven Ingævonic tribes, probably on the island of Seeland. Of these tribes Tacitus[1] relates the following:

> They unite in the worship of Nerthus, *i.e.* Mother Earth, and suppose her to mingle in the affairs of men, and to visit the nations. In an island in the ocean there is a sacred grove, in which stands a consecrated chariot covered with a cloth, which the priest alone is permitted to touch. The latter becomes aware of the presence of the goddess in the innermost recess, and with the greatest reverence attends upon her as she is drawn about by cows. These are days of joy, and every place is a scene of festivity, wheresoever the goddess deigns to visit and become a guest. They do not engage in wars; they do not take up arms; all weapons are shut. Peace and tranquillity are only then known, only then loved, until finally the same priest escorts the goddess, sated with the intercourse of mortals, back to her temple. The chariot, with its cover, and, if it appear credible, the deity herself, thereupon undergo ablution in a secluded lake. This service is performed by slaves, whom this very lake instantly swallows up.

However detailed this account may seem, it yet does not afford an answer to all the questions that one might be inclined to ask. Thus we are not told through what sign the priest perceived that the goddess was present in the innermost recess;

[1] *Germania*, Chapter 40.

what the nature of the temple was; or in what form the goddess rode about on the chariot. It is clear, however, that her cult was of great political importance for the tribes in question, who came together for the purposes of worship in sacred peace, and that the joy of her service was accompanied by terror, human sacrifices being offered to her, viz. the slaves that were drowned in her lake. The festival must have been a festival of spring: the awakening of the earth with the new season was celebrated with a solemn procession. To be compared with this is the fetching in of spring and summer under such names as "May queen," "Blumengraf," "Laubmännchen," "grüner Mann," "Pfingstklötzel," "Latzmann," etc., all customs with which we are familiar through folklore. In interpreting Nerthus as Mother Earth, Tacitus no doubt had in mind parallel rites that were observed in Rome in the worship of the Mater Magna, or some other goddess.

Another procession is referred to in *Germania*, Chapter 9:

> A division of the Suebi also sacrifice to Isis. As to the cause and origin of this foreign worship, I have been able to gather little information, further than that the symbol of a galley by which she is represented seems in itself to indicate that the cult was imported by way of sea.

Here Tacitus is evidently thinking of the *navigium Isidis*[1] at Rome, and is entirely mistaken in his inference that the cult was of foreign origin. That we are here dealing with a custom that continued in vogue long afterwards may be seen from a detailed account, in a medieval chronicle, of a ship procession led by weavers, that took place between Aachen and Maastricht.[2] In the spring, when agriculture and navigation opened up again, the people went around in festive processions, with a plough or a ship. But such customs do not in themselves account for the goddess and her worship. Some Teutonic deity must lie concealed behind Isis, not a Frau

[1] "Ship of Isis." [2] Grimm, DM.[4], pp. 214–217.

Eisen or Zisa, who are purely scholastic inventions, but possibly Frija, whose ship would then be symbolical of the clouds.[1]

Among the Marsi, the great goddess Tamfana was worshipped, whose temple, "the most celebrated among those tribes," Germanicus levelled to the ground.[2] The derivation and meaning of the name are uncertain. The festival came in the autumn, and the goddess is therefore probably to be associated with fertility of the soil and with the harvest. It is worthy of note that, both among these Istævonic Marsi and the Ingævonic tribes previously mentioned, the chief deity of the confederated tribes was a goddess. The same may possibly be true of a division of the Frisians, for the "grove of Baduhenna," where the Romans suffered a severe defeat,[3] A.D. 28, lay in Frisian territory; but we have before had occasion to note that Fosite was presumably the god of the confederated Frisian tribes.

We now proceed to a discussion of goddesses whose names have been found on Roman inscriptions. Some of these have already been mentioned. Chief among them is Nehalennia,[4] known to us from some thirty altars, with inscriptions and the figure of the goddess, mostly from the island of Walcheren (the Netherlands). Her attributes are a dog, a basket with fruit, and the prow of a ship; at times she is represented as accompanied by Hercules and Neptune. Without sufficient reason, she has been identified by some scholars with Isis. Her attributes clearly indicate a connection with fruitfulness and with navigation, and she was probably more especially the goddess of the seafarers on the coast. The statements that have been made concerning her magnificent temple on the

[1] See Müllenhoff, DA. IV, 218–220. The various conjectures concerning Isis are summarized by W. Drexler in Roscher's *Lexicon*, II, 548.

[2] Tacitus, *Annals*, I, 51.

[3] Tacitus, *Annals*, IV, 73.

[4] A survey of the monuments and a bibliography are given by M. Ihm in Roscher's *Lexicon*, III, 76–86.

island of Walcheren are entirely conjectural. Alcuin [1] relates how Willebrord had destroyed an *antiqui erroris idolum*,[2] and had greatly suffered from the rage of the *custos idoli*,[3] but there is nothing to show that this *idolum* either stood in a temple — although such was probably the case — or that it represented Nehalennia. It may have been an image of Wodan. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to reach any certain conclusion. The derivation of the name Nehalennia is also in dispute, and the very dress of the goddess gives evidence of Roman influence on the manner of representation.

Of other goddesses we know little more than the names as found on inscriptions. Such are: Sandraudiga (from the vicinity of Breda, the Netherlands); Hludana (from Friesland); the two Alæsiagæ Bede et Fimmilene, at Housesteads in England, on altars erected by Frisian soldiers; Hæva or Awai (Millingen, near Nymegen, the Netherlands), for whom together with Hercules Magusanus a man and wife erected an altar to implore fruitfulness on their union; dea Garmangabis; dea Vagdavercustis; dea Vercana; dea Harimella; dea Hariasa; Vihansa; and others whose Teutonic character is more or less problematical.

Of the four goddesses mentioned in the second Merseburg Charm,[4] Frija, the consort of the chief deity (Tiu or Wodan), from whom the sixth day of the week is named, is the most important. We shall return to her when considering the Norse Frigg. Alongside of her stands Volla, and in the North, too, Fulla is Frigg's handmaid.[5] The two others, Sunna and Sinthgunt, have been explained as the sun and moon, or at least as the sun and its sister.

The two goddesses of spring, Hreda of the month of March and Eostre of April, the Easter month, are at present usually

[1] Alcuin, *Vita Willebrordi*, Chapter 14.
[2] "An image representative of ancient error."
[3] "The keeper of the image."
[4] See above, p. 129.
[5] Prose introduction to *Grímnismál; Gylfaginning*, Chapter 35.

regarded as an invention of Bede,[1] although some scholars, Mogk among others, still maintain the existence of an ancient Teutonic goddess of spring, Austrô.

In the oral tradition of the people, we meet, in all parts of Germany, with a large number of names of the goddess (or goddesses) that rides through the air in the Twelve Nights, shows favor or disfavor toward spinners, blesses marriage, and performs many other functions. Their names are: Fru Freke, de Fui, de oll Frie, Fru Wod, Gode, Fru Harke, die Werre, Frau Stempe, and at times also Herodias, Diana, Abundia. It is as erroneous to derive some of these names from Frija, as to regard these figures of popular belief in the light of variant forms of the great goddess.

This error has gained the widest acceptance in the case of Holda and Perchta. These two names are derived from *helan* and *bergan*, respectively, both words that signify "to conceal." They accordingly seem to indicate a chthonic goddess of death. Holda is more frequently met with in Northern and Middle Germany, Perchta or Bertha in Southern Germany. Both are usually regarded as forms of Frija, and in support of this view Burchard of Worms (tenth century) is cited, who mentions a Frigaholda. The theory is, however, untenable. Holda and Perchta belong to folklore even in the early Middle Ages, and popular belief and custom have ascribed to them all manner of attributes, which mythologists have in vain sought to reduce to a unity. We know that in names of places in Alemannic territory, the two words occur as early as the fourth or fifth century.[2] The church inveighed — especially for the days of the nativity — against such customs as processions, *preparare mensam domine Perthe*,[3] and against those who "on the eighth day of the nativity of our Lord go about with

[1] *De Temporum Ratione*, Chapter 13.
[2] Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 90.
[3] "Preparing a table for Lady Pertha."

incense, cheese, a rope, and mallets."[1] In modern folklore we meet our goddesses on every hand. Holda leads the host of the dead in mountains, and during the ride through the air; she brings babes from the wells, and is also active in bad weather, for when it snows people say: "Lady Holle is shaking her bed" or "is plucking geese," and when it rains she "is washing her veil." In Upper Germany, Perchta is surrounded by the *Heimchen*, the children that have died, and in her train is at times the little girl with the jug of tears, a poetic motif that is full of pathos. In the Twelve Nights, food is left standing for both Holda and Perchta. The wild procession called the *Perchtenlaufen* in Tyrol and Switzerland falls in the time of the carnival; when it is especially uproarious, the harvest will be good. For this reason the two goddesses are frequently brought into connection with fruitfulness, be it of women or of the soil. A similar connection exists with woman's work, such as spinning: *au temps que la reine Berthe filait*[2] as the French saying has it. The same Bertha is also accounted the ancestress of families. She is not fair of form, but has a long nose and a large foot (*pedauca*). At times she is represented as causing calamity and disaster, in the person of the black Griet or the wild "iron Bertha." It is clear that these various forms cannot be reduced to a unity. With its exuberant imagination popular belief has developed these conceptions on all sides, and we are not warranted in inferring from them the existence of an ancient and primitive pagan belief, even though certain individual features may remind us of an ancient Teutonic goddess, and may have been actually borrowed from her, — an observation that applies with equal force to Venus and the Virgin Mary. These creations of the popular fancy are, therefore, at present justly eliminated when the elements of Teutonic paganism are being considered.

[1] Usener, *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, II, 86.
[2] "In the time when queen Bertha span."

Turning now to the Scandinavian North, we find there the Teutonic Frija (Frigg) and the specifically Norse Freyja.

By a critical analysis of that entire cluster of myths which he calls the necklace-myth, Müllenhoff has shown that Frija-Frigg was originally the wife of the sky god Tiu. This much at least seems certain, that Frija-Frigg, wherever encountered, is the consort of Wodan-Odhin, notwithstanding the fact that when seeking to interpret her as a goddess of nature we find only few traces that point to a chthonic character, over against numerous features that indicate a connection with the light of the sky. In Germany, the constellation Orion is called her *Rocken* (distaff) or *Spindel* (spindle), in Sweden, *Friggeroken* or *Friggetenen* (distaff or spindle of Frigg).

In Norse literature the necklace-myth has undergone certain changes, which do not, however, prevent its complete identification. In *Sǫrla Tháttr* (fourteenth century) it has been transferred to Freyja, who to obtain possession of the jewel surrendered her person to the four dwarfs that had forged it. Loki afterwards stole the necklace, but Odhin restored it to Freyja, who in return was to incite two kings to unending combat. The motif of self-surrender is also found elsewhere, viz. in *Lokasenna*, *Ynglingasaga*, and Saxo's *Historia Danica*, but in each case of Frigg, the consort of Odhin. A peculiar form of the myth has come down in *Svipdagsmál*, in which an account is given of the winning of the maiden Menglǫdh ("she who delights in a necklace") by the young Svipdag. Similar references are found in Danish and Swedish popular songs.

Both in the songs of the Edda and in *Gylfaginning*, Frigg is the chief among the goddesses. She dwells in the halls of the sea (Fensalir), but from Hlidhskjalf, her own and Odhin's high-seat, she also surveys the whole universe. Odhin takes counsel[1] of her. At times she even outwits him, and through her artifices involves him in difficulties, as when to win a wager

[1] *Vafthrúdhnismál.*

that his foster-son Geirrödhr showed himself inhospitable towards guests, she had the latter warned against a magician who was to visit him, so that when Odhin, disguised as Grimnir, pays him a visit, Geirrödhr has him placed between two fires, and thus tortures him for eight nights.[1] Frigg, who is also called *Fjǫrgyns mær* (wife of Fjǫrgynn, the latter probably a surname of Odhin), shares Odhin's knowledge of the fate of men.[2] The important part she plays in the myth of Baldr we have already had occasion to mention.[3]

Freyja is a goddess invented by the scalds, a female deity corresponding to the male Freyr. Hence she is also called *Vanabrúdhr*, *Vanadís*, *i.e.* goddess of the Vanir. At the same time she did not remain a mere poetic abstraction, but was zealously worshipped, by the side, or in the place, of Frigg, as may be seen from *Oddrúnargrátr*, 8:

> So grant thee aid the gracious powers,
> Freyja and Frigg and gods full many,
> As thou hast freed me from fear and distress.

Hyndluljódh, 10, makes mention of an altar on which Ottar made such frequent sacrifices that the stones melted. Her function as goddess of the dead she has in common with Odhin: "She chooses half the fallen each day, but Odhin the other half."[4] Her dwelling is called *Folk vangr* (Folk-field), and in it is situated the hall Sessrymir[5] (rich in seats), a name that probably contains a reference to the abode of the dead. In other sources[6] it is not the fallen heroes, but dead women who go to Freyja. In any case she owes this character as goddess of the dead to her union with Odhin. That towards the close of the pagan period Freyja had entirely taken the place of Frigg, is shown by a verse of the scald Hjallti Skeggjason,

[1] *Grímnismál*.
[2] *Lokasenna*, 26, 29.
[3] See above, p. 256.
[4] *Grímnismál*, 14.
[5] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 24.
[6] *Egilssaga*, Chapter 78.

composed in the year 999, on the occasion of the Icelandic *thing:*

> Ever will I gods blaspheme.
> Freyja methinks a dog does seem.
> Freyja a dog? Aye! let them be
> Both dogs together, Odhin and she.[1]

Freyja is the fairest of the goddesses, beneficent and greatly honored, and invoked more especially in affairs of love. Like Freyr she is a deity of sensuous love. In *Lokasenna* Loki twits her with having yielded to the wishes of all the Æsir and elves. The reproach affects her only slightly more than the other goddesses, all of whom Loki with great monotony accuses of the same immorality. The notion that Freyja rides about in a wagon drawn by cats may be derived from a foreign source: elsewhere she appears equipped with falcon plumage, with which she flies through the air. According to the Eddic myths, the giants are continually striving to carry her off. Thus Thrym endeavored to get possession of her; so also the giant who built the burgh for the Æsir, and likewise Hrungnir.

Somewhat curious is the narrative that constitutes the framework of *Hyndluljódh.* Freyja there wishes to ride to Walhalla with the giantess Hyndla, in order that the latter, endowed with prophetic power by Odhin, may give information concerning the noble ancestry of Freyja's favorite, Ottar, who had staked his whole property in a wager with Angantyr. It is extremely doubtful whether we are here dealing with a genuine mythical idea.

Equally strange is the myth to which *Völuspá*, 25, and *Hyndluljódh*, 48, allude, and of which *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 35, gives a brief account. Freyja is there called *Ódhs mær* (the wife of Odhr), and by this Odhr she is said to have a daughter named Hnoss (jewel). Odhr journeyed to distant lands, leaving Freyja behind in tears, tears that are drops of pure gold. She

[1] *Njalssaga*, Chapter 98, translated by Dasent.

followed in search of her husband, and this has given rise to the numerous names borne by the goddess, which she assumed among the various peoples when searching for Odhr. Perhaps Odhr is simply to be identified with Odhin, while the roaming about of the goddess mentioned in *Gylfaginning* may possibly be a foreign element. This myth, like others, has been subjected to the most marvellous fantastic interpretations. By way of illustration, to show to what length such methods may lead investigators, we may in the present case deviate from our usual custom of silently passing by all such excrescences of mythological study. Bugge regards Odhr as a copy of Adonis. While this may seem fanciful enough, it is sober in comparison with the theories of E. H. Meyer.[1] According to him, *Ódhs mær*, with her golden tears and her wanderings, is the bride of Christ, — for it is Christ who bestows the spirit, *ódhr*, — wandering about in the Babylonian vale of tears and seducing many nations. In union with Odhr (= Christ) she brings forth the golden *ornatus* (*hnoss*, jewel) of obedience. Behind all this scriptural allegory there also lies concealed, we are told, the kernel of a genuine myth dealing with the god of the wind and the goddess of the clouds: when the wind ceases, rain follows.

Around both Frigg and Freyja there are grouped a number of goddesses, who are accounted their retinue, and in part owe their origin to the surnames and attributes of these two deities. Fulla we have already met in the Volla of the Merseburg Charm. The others are of very rare occurrence; they are enumerated in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 35. The first of these is Saga, who is also mentioned in *Grímnismál*, 7, as drinking with Odhin out of golden beakers, amidst the murmuring waters in the hall Sökkvabekr. Like Frigg, therefore, she lives surrounded by water and is the consort of Odhin. Eir is the healer; Gna the messenger of Frigg, who rides on horseback

[1] *Germanische Mythologie*, §§ 197, 357.

through sky and sea, greatly to the astonishment of a Vanr, who caught sight of her at one time; Sjǫfn kindles love in the hearts of men. Lofn is gracious in the hearing of prayer and is potent in removing obstacles that stand in the way of marriage. Vǫr, who is also mentioned in *Thrymskvidha*, 30, is the goddess of vows and oaths (*várar*); Hlin shields against peril. Syn shuts the doors of the hall, and at the *thing* protects those who have to deny something under oath; Snotra grants wisdom. Without maintaining that all these names are mere abstractions and the work of mythographers, there is yet no reason for believing that these associates of Frigg struck a firm root in popular belief, and should be compared with the divinities of the *indigitamenta*.[1] The following may be regarded as surnames of Freyja: Menglǫdh, Mardǫll (shining over the sea), Gefn (the giver?), Horn, Syr, and possibly a few others whose meaning is not clear. As already indicated, the Vanir goddess, Gullveig-Heidhr of *Völuspa*, also belongs to this category.

Aside from these two great goddesses, Frigg and Freyja, we have already encountered a number of mothers and consorts of gods that do not call for any further comment. Among them are: Jǫrdh, the earth; Rindr, the mother of Vali; Ran, the goddess of the sea, who draws men down to its depths;[2] Sif, the wife of Thor; Nanna, the faithful wife of Baldr; Sigyn, the devoted wife of Loki; Skadhi, the daughter of Thjazi, to whom temples and groves are consecrated;[3] Thorgerdh Hǫlgabrudh,[4] also a Finnish woman, and some others that need not be here enumerated. Three, however, deserve special attention: Gefjon, Idhunn, and Hel.

The first of these, Gefjon, both by her name and in several other particulars, reminds one of Freyja (or Frigg). Like the

[1] Lists of divine powers kept by the Roman pontifices. These deities were described as separate functions, not as persons.

[2] *Helgakvidha Hjǫrvardhssonar*, 18; *Helgakvidha Hundingsbana*, I, 31.

[3] *Lokasenna*, 51.

[4] See above, p. 95.

latter, she surrenders herself to gain possession of a precious ornament, and also shares with Odhin the knowledge of the fate of the world.[1] To her also come those who die as maids.[2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 1, and *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 5, tell of a Gefjon, who with four oxen ploughed a piece of land from what is now the Mælar Lake and formed the island of Seeland out of it, an event of which the scald Bragi had already sung. According to Müllenhoff, this is a Swedish saga, which originally had no connection whatever with the Danish island of Seeland, Gefjon being identical with the Swedish Vanir goddess Freyja.[3] Gering, on the other hand, would draw a sharp distinction between the goddess Gefjon and the ploughing giantess, and is of the opinion that the classing of Gefjon among the Æsir in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 1, is probably due to an interpolation by a scribe.[4]

Idhunn has the golden apples of youth in her keeping. She falls into the clutches of the giant Thjazi, but the Æsir compel Loki to bring her back again.[5] The same myth forms the subject of Thjodholf's *Haustlǫng*; it is a poetical treatment of the widely current motif of the rejuvenating apples, a motif which the Teutons certainly had no need of borrowing from the Greeks, even though Golther has shown, with great learning, that Iceland did not produce apples. In the Edda, Idhunn is the wife of Bragi, whose part she takes at Ægir's feast, whereupon Loki reviles her with an allusion to a myth that has not come down to us.[6]

There is but little to be said of Hel. Grimm regarded Halja as "one of the oldest and commonest conceptions of Teutonic paganism," who appeared "the less hellish and the more godlike," the further we go back in point of time.[7] This position

[1] *Lokasenna*, 20, 21.
[2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 35.
[3] DA. II, 361.
[4] Gering, *Edda*, p. 297, note 2.
[5] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 26; *Bragarœdhur*, Chapter 2.
[6] *Lokasenna*, 16–18.
[7] DM.[4], p. 262.

can no longer be maintained. Hel is only a very weak personification: as a rule, the word indicates a place. Even where Hel does appear as a person, she takes little part in the action.[1] She is the daughter of Loki and the giantess Angrbodha. To her come the dead, — among them Baldr, — whom she does not allow to return. At a later period, only those who die a straw-death go to Hel, whereas the heroes who have fallen in battle go to Odhin in Walhalla. Hel as a division of the world will receive consideration later on.

[1] *Völuspa*, 38, 39; *Baldrs Draumar*, 3; *Grimnismál*, 31; *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 3, 34, 49.

CHAPTER XIII

GODS AND DIVINE NATURE

In the present chapter we shall attempt to sum up the results that have been arrived at in our study of the individual deities as regards divine nature and character. In doing so the great difference between the German and the Scandinavian material must constantly be borne in mind. Nor should we forget that none of the Teutonic heathen peoples evolved theories concerning the nature of their gods: they had no other theology than that involved in their rites and myths.

When inquiring into the real significance of a conception, it has become customary first of all to consult the etymology of the word in question; not altogether justly so, inasmuch as the derivation of a word, which is so often lost to the consciousness of a people, does not by any means always determine the sense in which it was actually used. For the history of Teutonic religion, it is therefore of little importance to know that the common Teutonic stem *god* is originally neuter, and is probably cognate with the Sanscrit root *hû* (to invoke), and has no connection whatever with the word "good." The name Æsir has been identified with the Sanscrit Asuras. This word, too, is found among all Teutons; Jordanes[1] uses it in speaking of the demi-gods from which the Gothic nobility is descended. Proper names with *As*, *Ans*, and *Os* as the first element are encountered on every side. Among Anglo-Saxons and Frisians we find the form *ése*. Among Norsemen we are familiar with the Æsir (feminine Ásynjur), and in such compositions as *landás* (god of the land), *ásmegin* (divine power), the word is practically

[1] DOAG., Chapter 13.

synonymous with "god." The Vanir have already been treated in detail. Other designations for "god" are: *dísir* (women), *tívar* (the beaming ones), *regin*, *røgn* (counsellors), *metod* (the measurers), *bønd*, *hapt* (shackles).

The idea that monotheism lies at the basis of Teutonic polytheism (Simrock) has no longer any advocates, although some scholars[1] still maintain the view that Teutonic mythology, when interrupted in its course of development, was tending in a monotheistic direction. Far more popular, though equally erroneous, is the animistic conception, according to which the gods represent an evolution of the higher demons, who in their turn took their origin from a belief in the existence of souls and spirits.[2] This latter theory is totally lacking in historical basis. As far as we are able to go back in Teutonic antiquity we find great gods existing. Even Tacitus mentions them, whereas he is silent on the subject of souls and spirits.

Through the use of their names in the designations for the days of the week, Tiu, Wodan, Donar, and Frija are with absolute certainty ascertained to be ancient Teutonic divinities. While we cannot infer from this that they were the only ones, this group of four universally worshipped gods forms, at any rate, the real centre of Teutonic mythology. Notwithstanding the divergent opinions of E. H. Meyer and, in part, of Mogk, there is very little doubt as to their real nature: Tiu was the god of the sky; Wodan, the god of the wind or the dead; Donar, the god of thunder; Frija, goddess of the sky rather than of the earth.

It is likewise evident that they are not exclusively deities of nature, but that their character as gods of tribes and peoples, their relation to armed host and to *thing*, are at least equally original. These latter functions can neither be derived from their character as gods of nature, nor can they be regarded as of minor importance. Mythologists frequently devote their attention too exclusively to the general character of the gods

[1] K. Maurer; E. Sars. [2] E. H. Meyer.

as beings expressive of forces of nature, whereas it is just the specific features, those which define them locally and ethnically, to which they in largest measure owe their religious significance. This observation holds good also for the Teutons. Even in the case of the tribes described by Tacitus, the gods were progenitors of the tribe, and leaders in war, who upheld justice and maintained peace, rather than exponents of phenomena of nature.

In a previous volume of the present series,[1] Professor Jastrow has very properly drawn a distinction between the "active pantheon" and the deities introduced more or less arbitrarily and for a definite purpose, the latter class having gained no foothold in popular belief. For Teutonic mythology as well, this distinction is of great importance: a number of divinities are merely poetical personifications of Norse literature. It is not always easy to draw the border line between the active and the fictitious pantheon; in numerous instances the opinions of scholars on this point are divided. The criteria are: the cult of a god, the rôle he plays in genuine nature-myths, and the extent to which his name enters as an element in proper names. The first of these is the most conclusive: the god that is worshipped by a tribe or people is a genuine god. We are treading on less certain ground when we are compelled to seek for information concerning the gods in the myths, for a god has frequently been introduced into a genuine myth who did not originally stand in any relation to it; or, again, one god may have taken the place of another. At the same time, we are able to determine, from myths in which they play a rôle, that Baldr and Heimdallr were genuine gods, even though we are almost absolutely in the dark concerning their cult. Of the third criterion, the proper names, Teutonic mythologists, owing to the meagreness of available data, have made free use. At times undue importance has doubtless been attached to it.

[1] *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 188.

Tacitus furnishes us practically no information concerning the outward appearance and the manner of life of the gods. An air of mystery surrounds them. While Nerthus holds intercourse with men, this intercourse is restricted to very narrow limits and excludes all familiarity. The word "fear" (terror) characterizes the cult. What German popular tales of a later period tell of the intercourse of gods with men, how they punish evil and reward the good, must not, as has at times been done,[1] be transferred to the heathen mythology.

In Norse mythology the case is entirely different. The gods have there been endowed to a far greater degree with human qualities. They resemble men, but are stronger, more powerful, and are invested with superhuman faculties. Of several (Baldr, Heimdallr, Idhunn) we are told that they were wondrously fair. The most individualized are: Odhin as a powerful, wise, shrewd old man; Baldr, the beaming hero, beloved of all; Thor, the *miles gloriosus*,[2] who performs incredible exploits; Frigg, Odhin's busy housewife, and the anxious mother of Baldr. These gods are subject also to human needs and infirmities: they eat and drink — Thor, especially, is a good deal of a glutton — and are very fond of assembling for a feast in the hall of Ægir. Odhin lacks an eye, Tyr a hand; Hǫdhr is blind; Baldr perishes. Their character and their emotions are entirely human, — kindness, anger, shrewdness. Their whole life, moreover, is governed by their outward interests; even with the best of them there is not a suggestion of higher moral motives. In general they are human beings that have been physically exalted; they are less circumscribed, more powerful than ordinary men, and above all are endowed with magic power.

As regards the abodes of the gods, Tacitus would seem to imply that they dwell in the forest, but it is frequently difficult to distinguish sharply between the abode of a god and the

[1] As by J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge*, II, 21–64. [2] "Boastful soldier."

place where he was worshipped, and it is therefore possible that in the present instance these forests are to be regarded merely as "temples of unhewn wood." Popular belief usually localizes the gods in mountains or springs. Norse literature enumerates numerous halls and dwellings of the gods,[1] but these are to be considered literary fiction. Asgardh is looked upon as the heavenly citadel, which is reached by the bridge Bifrǫst (rainbow).

It is a matter of some significance that the power of the gods is in various ways made dependent upon external conditions, or upon the possession of this or that object. Odhin surveys the whole world and observes all the doings of men, but only because he is seated on his throne, Hlidhskjalf; if any one else — as Freyr in *Skírnismál* — stations himself on it, he sees exactly the same things. Similarly, other gods may avail themselves of the falcon plumage with which Freyja flies through the air. When Hlorridhi (Thor) has lost his hammer, a large part of his strength has departed with it, and on his journey to Geirrödhr he must consider himself fortunate that the giantess at whose house he stops lends him her belt of strength, gauntlets, and staff. Part of the divine power is always represented as connected with the precious objects, such as Odhin's ring, Draupnir, which the dwarfs have fashioned for the gods. Their youth the gods owe to the apples of Idhunn. Similar conceptions are met with in various mythologies, but this dependent nature of the gods receives especial emphasis in Norse mythology, which gives evidence of it on every hand. Not to their own nature as such, but to external conditions, do the gods owe their power.

Again and again we encounter groups of gods among the Teutons. Usually such groups consist of three: Mercury, Hercules, Mars (Tacitus); Thor, Odhin, Freyr (Upsala); Odhin, Hœnir, Loki (Edda). In formulas of renunciation and in

[1] *Grímnismál; Gylfaginning.*

minne-drinkings[1] three gods are likewise frequently mentioned together, but no especial significance is to be attached to this. It is probably to be explained on the score of an enumeration of the chief gods, or of the coupling of the gods of various tribes and peoples. Lists of greater length are found in the Norse sources. *Grímnismál* mentions nine gods (Thor, Ullr, Freyr, Odhin, Baldr, Heimdallr, Forseti, Njǫrdhr, Vidharr), and three goddesses (Saga, Freyja, Skadhi). The Snorra Edda makes repeated attempts to construct a system of twelve Æsir, be it in imitation of the Greek pantheon, or as the twelve assistants of the judge. The lists,[2] however, invariably contain more than twelve names. This is doubtless the work of later mythographers, and utterly without significance from the point of view of religion. Nor is there any reason for assuming such a group of twelve for Germany.[3] The lists include, without distinction, Æsir and Vanir, the circle of Baldr (Baldr, Hǫdhr, Vali) occupying a prominent place. Alongside of the Æsir stand the goddesses, the Ásynjur, who, inclusive of the minor deities, reach the number of eighteen.[4] As we have seen, some of these are to be regarded merely as surnames or attributes of the greater deities, others as their servants and retinue.

The number of Teutonic divinities is strikingly small. There are, to be sure, also departed spirits and demons, but Teutonic antiquity offers no parallel to the countless deities that we meet with among other peoples, in which the whole sphere of nature and all the activities of life are deified, every moment of life as well as every creature being assigned its tūtelar genius. Nor is it allowable, without subjecting the material to a rigid

[1] See Grimm, DM.[4], p. 48.

[2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 20–33; *Bragarœdhur*, Chapter 1; *Skáldskaparmál; Nafnathulur. Hyndluljódh*, 30, also makes mention of the fact that there are twelve Æsir.

[3] The lists may be found in E. Wilken, *Untersuchungen zur Snorra-Edda*, pp. 92–94. See also K. Weinhold, *Die deutschen Zwölfgötter*, ZfdPh. I, 129–133.

[4] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 35.

examination, to supplement our meagre data from folklore, which is usually of a later date. While our sources only give us legends and tales from the higher strata of society — those of the chieftains and the poets — yet this does not in itself furnish a sufficient explanation for the relatively small number of deities.

We have thus far purposely passed by the character of the gods as revealed in connection with the world-drama. This product of a later, specifically Norse, development will demand our attention in another connection.

CHAPTER XIV

ANIMISM, SOULS, WORSHIP OF THE DEAD

It would lead us too far and lies beyond the scope of this volume to examine anew the general question as to the animistic elements present in religion. The belief in souls, while nowhere totally lacking, also nowhere constitutes the whole of religion. While animism is doubtless primitive, it does not by any means form the origin of all ideas about higher beings. Many animistic conceptions are, moreover, of comparatively late growth. In the present instance we are, at any rate, concerned only with tracing the specific forms which belief in souls and spirits assumed among the Teutons.

In keeping with the conception of the soul as breath or wind, which leaves the body at death, the belief has established itself that souls dwell in the air. The souls flit away through windows; in storm and whirlwind they sweep shrieking through the air, especially during the Twelve Nights, which are ordinarily reckoned as falling between Christmas and Epiphany, although the term does not everywhere designate exactly the same period.[1] We have already seen that the notion of the Furious Host or the Wild Hunt, with or without Wodan as leader, combines a nature-myth, *i.e.* the wind, with the belief in souls. Similarly, the souls of heroes continue the combat in the sky, above the field of battle. It is even quite conceivable that the story of the combat between Hǫgni and Hedhinn contains an historical reminiscence, and that the souls that are thus said to continue the combat after death are those of historical personages.[2] It is, at any rate, certain that the Norsemen

[1] See above, p. 216. [2] Mogk, PG.[2], III, 256.

held the belief that heroes who had fallen in battle entered Walhalla as *Einherjar*.

In Norse literature, and in Teutonic popular belief as well, we frequently meet with the tradition that souls in the guise of small flames frequent the neighborhood of the place where the corpse lies buried. They likewise roam about to expiate a crime. Cross-roads are thought to be haunted by souls, and the church accordingly inveighed against worshipping at *bivia* and *trivia;* but this latter belief is perhaps of Roman origin. In Norse sagas it is not an uncommon occurrence that the body of a person who was believed to haunt the earth was dug up and burnt.

A permanent abode of souls is mentioned in several sources. This abode of the souls is at times conceived as lying beyond the sea ; souls or corpses must therefore be conveyed across this or be left at the mercy of winds and waves. In a noteworthy passage in Procopius,[1] Britain is called the land of the dead. On the opposite coast, in Frankish territory, dwell the mariners who, without catching sight of their passengers, carry the dead across the channel. At midnight they are notified in a mysterious manner, and setting out with their heavily laden boats succeed in reaching the island of Britain in a single hour. Upon their arrival the souls are called out by name, and the ferrymen thereupon return with their empty boats. Claudian (fifth century) likewise tells us that at the extreme limits of Gaul, *i.e.* opposite the British coast, "there is a spot, where Gaul stretches out its furthermost shore opposite the waters of the ocean, where they say that Ulixes with a libation of blood stirred up the silent folk. There the mournful plaint of shades flitting about with a gentle whir is heard. The natives see the pallid forms and the figures of the dead depart."[2] According to other sources, the land of souls is situated in the mountains, and it is there that the historical

[1] *B. Goth.*, IV, 20. [2] Claudian, *In Rufinum*, I, 123.

and mythical heroes have their abode: Barbarossa in the Kyffhäuser, Holger Danske under the rock of Kronburg (Denmark), Siegfried in Geroldseck, and the three founders of the Swiss federation at Grütli in a cleft in the rock near the Lake of Lucerne. Souls of unknown men issue forth from the mountains as well: "armed hosts of horsemen," "souls of fallen soldiers," including even women and others besides warriors. Icelandic sagas too repeatedly refer to the belief that the dead dwell in mountains. We have here a special form of that translation, which Rohde, *Psyche*,[1] was the first to treat at length, but to which even Jacob Grimm devoted a separate chapter containing a large number of examples.

Some scholars hold the view that the souls are thought of as dwelling in ponds and springs, from which children are also supposed to come. It is clear that the belief in an abode of the souls must in any case not be represented as having assumed a thoroughly systematic form.[2] The souls were conceived as roaming about in the vicinity of house or grave, in the air or in the mountains. The heavenly "sun garden" and the "subterranean meadow" of the lower world are, like the Walhalla of the scalds, the product of later poetic invention. It is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty how old or how general is the conception of Hel, as the dark and dismal place, the destination of all the dead. That the latter include warriors appears from a passage in *Widukind*, cited by Grimm,[3] where Widukind, amazed at the number of those who had fallen in a battle between the Saxons and Franks, exclaims, "Where might there be a Hel (*infernus*) so large that it could receive such a multitude of the slain?" *Baldrs Draumar*, 2, 3; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 49; and *Helreidh*

[1] E. Rohde, *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, 1894 (second edition, 1898).

[2] As is done, *e.g.* by H. Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntefeste*, pp. 129–165.

[3] DM.[4], p. 668.

Brynhildar likewise depict the miseries of Hel; not, however, as a place of punishment, such as Nastrand,[1] where perjurers and murderers expiate their guilt.

The Rosengarten (rose garden) is a creation of medieval German poetry, as the Walhalla is of Norse poetry. A large number of Rosengärten have been localized in Tyrol and elsewhere, the most famous being that of Gibich, Kriemhild's father, near Worms. These Rosengärten, now pictured as paradise, and again as churchyards, represent another peculiar form of the abode of souls. Thither too a ferryman conveys the souls across the water; there too the heroes engage in combat.[2]

From the finds in graves, both of the prehistoric and of later times, as well as from accounts in literary monuments,[3] and from what we read in Jordanes[4] concerning the funeral games of Attila, we learn that the Teutons placed all kinds of objects in the graves of their dead: weapons and horses; jewels and ornaments; needles for women and toys for children. It would also seem that slaves and widows, willingly or unwillingly, at times accompanied their lord and master to the land of the dead. Some of the gifts that were placed on the funeral pyre or in the grave may have had a sacrificial intent; others were no doubt designed for use in the land of the dead. From this we may infer that the soul when separated from the body was thought of as still subject to wants similar to those of men upon earth. The Teutonic conception of the life after death was therefore probably that of a shadowy continuation of earthly existence.

Everywhere in Norse literature we meet with the notion of a man's second *ego*, his double (*doppelgänger*), his *fylgja*

[1] *Völuspa*, 38, 39.

[2] The material has been collected by E. H. Meyer, GM., § 173.

[3] Among these are the brief statement of Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 27, and the detailed description of *Beowulf*, ll. 3158 ff.

[4] DOAG., Chapter 49.

(follower). This *fylgja* is nothing less than man's soul, which dwells in the body, and leaves it at death, but which even during one's lifetime already leads an independent existence, so that in one instance a person is even said to have stumbled over his own *fylgja*. Similarly, Helgi's *fylgjur* (plural) are seen before his death.[1] The *fylgja* stands on the border line dividing souls from spirits. The *fylgja* is the soul which leaves man in his sleep, which after his death passes over to his son, so that the personal *fylgja* (*mannsfylgja*) becomes a family *fylgja* (*ættarfylgja*). It may also be feminine in form (*fylgjukona*), a sort of goddess (*dís*) who premonishes man in dreams, appears to him more especially shortly before his death, at times vexes, and then again protects him. Such *fylgjur* are referred to in *Atlamál*, 27 :

> Methought dead women came hither by night, poorly clad; they wished to choose thee; they bade thee forthwith to their benches.

Aside from the animistic basis, the conception of *fylgjur* includes, therefore, the notions of second sight, of dream spirit, and of guardian or attendant spirit.

Similar notions are associated with the Swedish *vård* and the Old Norse *hamingja*. The latter word is explained by Mogk as referring to the form (*hamr*) which the soul assumes when becoming visible, which is frequently that of animals. Thus Atli's *hamr* appears as eagle.[2] E. H. Meyer, following out a suggestion of Grimm,[3] connects *hamingja* with the *caput galeatum*, the caul about the head with which certain "lucky children" are born. This membrane, the seat of the soul or of the guardian spirit, is in such cases carefully preserved.

Related to *fylgja* is the mare,[4] nightmare (French *cauchemar*), or incubus. The derivation of the word is uncertain. The

[1] *Helgakvidha Hjǫrvardhssonar*, 34 (prose).
[2] *Atlamál*, 18. [3] DM.[4], p. 728.
[4] "A mare is a *mannsfylgja*." *Vatnsdœlasaga*.

mare torments men at night in their sleep, at times even killing them, as happened to the Swedish king Vanland, according to *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 16. The story is told us in a strophe of the scald Thjodholf:

Now the witch-wight
Drove king Vanland
Down to visit
Vilir's brother.
There the troll-wise
Blind-night's witchwife
Trod all about
Men's over-thrower.[1]
The jewel-caster,[1]
He whom the mare quelled,
On Skuta's bed,[2]
There was he burning.[3]

The origin of the whole conception may be traced to the nightmare, the distressing dream that is accompanied by the feeling of physical pressure; the "mare," usually thought of as feminine, causes a feeling of suffocation and depression, and, as *incubus* or *succubus*, is also represented as holding carnal intercourse. This nightmare may also attack animals, but ordinarily it torments only men. Sometimes it is the soul of a man that issues forth at night to thus visit some other person in his sleep. Numerous names are used to designate these tormenting spirits: mare,[4] alp[5]; Trut or Trude in Bavaria and Tyrol; and in Upper Germany such names as Schrettele, Schrat, Ratz, Doggele, Druckerle, Letzel, etc.

But departed spirits do not merely visit men in their sleep with the physical feeling of suffocation; they also appear to

[1] King Vanland. [2] Skuta is the name of a river.
[3] The translation is from the *Saga Library*, Vol. III.
[4] As in *mich reitet die Mahre*, "the mare rides me."
[5] As in *mich drückt der Alp*, "the alp presses me." Etymologically *alp* is connected with *elf*. From a mythological point of view, the two notions must, of course, be kept entirely distinct.

them in their dreams. Thus the dead that cannot gain rest in the grave appear to men for various purposes: to avenge themselves; to make amends for some neglect; or to warn men and foretell the future. Such manifestations are closely related to apparitions of ghosts, for which latter the Old Norse *draugr* (Old High German *gitroc*) was in use. Notwithstanding the tormenting character that these dreams frequently assumed, it was still accounted a defect if a person lacked the susceptibility for them, and was *draumstoli* (dream-stolen). As the dead exert influence on the living, so also conversely: excessive grief of the living disturbs the rest of the dead; witness the story of the Jug of Tears and Bürger's *Lenore*.[1] Helgi likewise says of Sigrun's constant weeping:

> Thou weepest cruel tears, thou gold-dight, sun-bright lady of the South, before thou goest to sleep: every one of them falls bloody, dank cold, chilly, fraught with sobs, upon my breast.[2]

But the dead do not merely roam about and become visible; they also now and then come to life again. While the account of Asinius Pollio to be found in Appianus, that the Teutons of Ariovistus fought so bravely "on account of their hope that they would come to life again" is ambiguous, several Norse sources mention this restoration to life on earth in a wholly unmistakable way. Thus, in the Helgi Lays, Helgi and Svava are reborn as Helgi and Sigrun, and we know that in the Kara Lays, which have not come down to us, they were represented as having once more returned. For "in ancient times," thus the prose passage at the close of *Helgakvidha Hundingsbana*, II, tells us, "it was believed that men could be reborn, but at present this is considered old woman's talk." This return was regarded not as a misfortune, but as a blessing, and we hence

[1] See Wackernagel, *Zur Erklärung und Beurteilung von Bürger's Lenore* (*Kl. Schr.*, II, 399 ff.); Erich Schmidt, *Charakteristiken*, pp. 223 ff.

[2] *Helgakvidha Hundingsbana*, II, 44 (CPB. I, 143).

find the curse pronounced on Brynhild: "Never be she born again."[1] Examples of rebirth are, however, not numerous. In the person of the holy Olaf it was said that a former king had been reborn. Here and there, in the naming of a child after a dead person, the idea of a rebirth of the latter in the person of his namesake seems also to have been taken in a far more physical sense than that which we now attach to it.

These animistic conceptions are to be sharply distinguished from the belief in immortality. This latter, in the Platonic sense of the term, is entirely lacking. The soul roams about, appears to men, is at times reborn, and for all these manifestations no period of time is set, no limit defined. Men continue to be seen as long as they are not forgotten. Apparitions of unknown souls at times inspire fear. A definite dogma of immortality cannot be deduced from animism among such a people as the Teutons.

When wandering about and appearing in visible form, the soul may assume various shapes, more especially those of animals. Norse literature and folklore furnish an abundance of examples. A number of times the soul is represented as having the form of a mouse, as in the well-known story of the sleeping girl from whose mouth a red mouse was seen creeping forth. A companion turned the sleeping girl around, and when the mouse returned it could no longer find its way back, wandered about aimlessly for a while, and then disappeared. But the girl did not again awake: she was *mausetot* ("mouse-dead," *i.e.* stone dead). The mice that pursued the cruel bishop Hatto of Mainz into his tower near Bingen on the Rhine were likewise the souls of the poor people, whom he had burnt alive, because he could not furnish them with food. Similarly, the rats in the tale of the Pied Piper of Hameln are the souls of the little children. Once upon a time, when king Gunthram was resting in the forest from the chase, his soul crept out of

[1] *Sigurdharkvidha en skamma*, 45.

his mouth in the shape of a snake. Over the sword of one of the king's companions it passed a little brook and entered a mountain, afterwards returning again to the mouth of the king by the way it had come. The king in the meantime had dreamt that he crossed a bridge over a river, and arrived in a mountain full of gold. The treasure, we are told, was afterwards actually lifted. Paulus Diaconus considered this account so remarkable that he inserted it in his *History of the Lombards*,[1] notwithstanding the fact that it concerns a Frankish king. In one of the battles in which Hrolf Kraki was engaged, his most valiant hero, Bjarki, was nowhere to be seen, but in his stead a stout bear fought at the side of the king, and with his claws slew more enemies than five warriors could have done: it was Bjarki's *fylgja*, which fought while his body was asleep.

There is scarcely any limit to the examples that might be added to the above. The *fylgja* may assume the form of a great variety of animals: of wolf and bear, bird, snake, and other animals that are seen in dreams;[2] likewise of all kinds of birds,—ravens, crows, doves, and swans. Bees, beetles, and flies are also frequently souls. While in the case of animals it is not always an easy matter to draw an exact line of demarcation between animistic and various other conceptions, it can in any case not be gainsaid that the belief in migration of the soul into the bodies of animals has given rise to an extensive and varied "soul fauna." At times a connection may be traced between the character of an individual and the animal whose shape he takes on, men that are shrewd appearing as foxes, those that are cruel as wolves.

Less frequent, though not altogether rare, is the mention of trees as the abode of souls. The conceptions that cluster

[1] III, 34.

[2] Compare the list given by W. Henzen, *Ueber die Träume in der altnordischen Sagalitteratur*, p. 38. On the whole subject of soul migration, see G. Storm, *Vore forfædres tro på sjælevandring og deres opkaldelsessystem*, AfnF. IX, 199–222.

around the worship of trees are of a somewhat complex nature.[1] The tree may itself be conceived of as possessing a soul; it bleeds when struck, and the violation of trees is in such cases a real crime. Parallel with this we meet the notion that the souls of the dead are imprisoned in trees. Trees are also frequently held to be the residence of the life spirit of an individual (trees of life), or of the guardian spirit of house and home (the Swedish *vårdträd* or *botra*). Tree worship represents, therefore, both a bit of nature-worship and a belief in human fate, associated symbolically with a definite species of the vegetable world. Side by side with this there exists the animistic conception of the relationship of the human soul with the soul of plants, and of the migration of the human soul into plants.

The belief in werewolves is not peculiar to the Teutons, but is found among many other peoples.[2] Characteristically Scandinavian, however, is the closely related belief in Berserkers. They are people that possess the power of assuming other shapes. They are *eigi einhamir*, *i.e.* not of one shape; or *hamramr*, *hamhleitha* (feminine), *i.e.* changing form. Either by donning a wolf's skin or a belt made out of wolf's skin, or by reason of a natural tendency through which this metamorphosis comes upon them at certain stated times, such men run about in the shape of wolves, the eye alone retaining its human appearance. The werewolf (*i.e.* man-wolf) is known to us both from Norse literature and from medieval and modern popular belief. Thus the beginning of the Egils Saga tells us that the progenitor of the Myramen was toward evening subject to sudden attacks which made him wholly unlike himself, for which reason he bore the name Kveldulfr (evening-wolf).

[1] The two works dealing with this subject, Mannhardt, *Der Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme*, and A. Koberstein, *Ueber die Vorstellung von dem Fortleben menschlicher Seelen in der Pflanzenwelt* (1849; reprinted in *Weimar Jahrb.*, I, 72–100) differ in their views of the matter.

[2] W. Hertz, *Der Werwolf* (*Beitrag zur Sagengeschichte*, 1862).

Norse literature abounds in stories of Berserkers. We have already mentioned how Bjarki, one of Hrolf Kraki's warriors, fought at his side in the form of a bear. Ordinarily, however, these "bear-skin clad" retain their human shape, although their actions when the *Berserkrgangr* comes upon them are no longer human in character. An uncontrollable frenzy seizes them; their mouths begin to foam; they bark like dogs and growl like bears; they walk through fire, are invulnerable to iron, gnaw their shields, devour glowing coals, and carry all before them. When the attack has passed by, Berserkers are no stronger than ordinary men. The Norwegian kings were fond of having a few Berserkers among their followers and at times presented them to one another. They are also frequently mentioned in Icelandic sagas, where they decide the issue of many a struggle. It not rarely happens that this peculiarity is characteristic of a family: thus the seven sons of Syvaldus, the twelve sons of Arngrim, Angantyr and his brothers, were all sturdy Berserkers. Outside the North traces of Berserkers are to be found only among the Lombards.[1]

The belief in witches also contains elements that are drawn from the animistic conceptions of Teutonic paganism, such as the riding through the air and the changing of shape. We do not, therefore, with Soldan,[2] derive the origin of this belief solely from classical antiquity. At the same time the belief is of too complex a character, and has been too largely combined with later and foreign elements, to allow us to regard the witches as part and parcel of Teutonic mythology and to identify them with the Norse *troll* and *vølur* (wise women), or with the "dead women" of some of the Eddic songs. We do not, therefore, consider the witches as properly forming a part of our subject, and shall not consider them in this connection.

[1] See Symons, GH.[2], p. 116.

[2] *Geschichte der Hexenprocesse*, neu bearbeitet von H. Heppe (2 vos., 1880).

The belief in souls gave rise to numerous customs in connection with the dead, which the church sought zealously to eradicate. Several of these continue in vogue until the present day. We here mention a few whose animistic basis is at once apparent: the closing of mouth and eyes of the corpse, either to prevent the soul from returning through these openings, or to ward off the evil eye; the carrying out of the body under the threshold, or through an unusual opening, to keep the soul from finding its way back again; the burning of a light near the corpse, to keep evil spirits or the soul itself at a distance; the covering of the mirror, that the soul may not see its image and thus be held fast to the spot; the burying in a remote place, to banish the soul to a distance; the opening of doors and windows, to facilitate the egress of the soul; the watching over the corpse; the announcing of the death of the master of the house to all manner of objects in house and yard and to the bees in the hive; the calling out of the name of the deceased, which causes souls and mares that roam about to disappear; the giving along, or the placing on the grave, of food, at times also of shoes and staff; the careful tending of the house-snake, which is the residence of the soul of the deceased and as such a beneficent tutelar genius of the home, a sort of *lar*. All these customs lie near the border line separating popular observance from religious worship. While soul-cult belongs rather to the former, and is not part of a more or less official and organized worship, it has none the less struck deep roots in the life of the people. Its purpose is on the one hand to keep the soul that is feared at a distance, on the other to provide for its wants,[1] but these two phases, the dark and light sides, frequently coalesce. It is not clear to which of these two classes the *dadsisas* belong, against which the *Indiculus Superstitionum*[2] inveighs as constituting "idolatry over the

[1] The former E. H. Meyer designates as *Seelenabwehr*, the latter as *Seelenpflege*.
[2] "List of superstitious practices," of the eighth century.

dead." These were songs sung for the dead at night ("devilish songs") and either served to ward off the soul, or were invocations through which oracular utterances concerning the future were obtained from the dead.[1] Or else they were mere lamentations over the dead, to which no magical significance was attached, similar to those that were raised over Attila.[2] The fact that the *dadsisas* were repeated on the grave would, however, seem to argue against this latter supposition.

Funeral banquets are also met with; the church sought to prevent drinking bouts at the grave. In the North the funeral feast is frequently called *erfiǫl* (heir-beer), inasmuch as it was given not only in memory of the deceased, but also formed the solemn occasion on which the heir entered upon his inheritance. This latter frequently took place a considerable length of time after the demise of the head of the house; at any rate not before the exaction of the blood-vengeance, in case the deceased had been murdered. At times a large number of guests assembled on these occasions: we know of "heir-beers" to which more than a thousand persons sat down. The church sought to give these feasts a Christian dress, and, in order to make them a source of income, sent priests to be present at them and consecrated beakers to Christ and St. Michael.[3] Now and then the soul of the deceased himself is supposed to take part in the feast. Of a man who had been drowned we are told that he appeared at his own "heir-beer," which was held to be a favorable sign as regards his fate with Ran in the depths of the sea.[4]

The worship of ancestors and heroes, while related to that of soul worship, is yet distinguished from it by certain definite characteristics. Ancestors and heroes are departed ones, but they likewise possess a personality, and other elements besides the nature of the soul enter into their cult: it serves to maintain

1 Mogk.
2 Jordanes, DOAG., Chapter 49.
3 Weinhold, *Altnördisches Leben*, p. 500.
4 *Eyrbyggjasaga*, Chapter 54.

the continuity of the life of the family, the kin, and the tribe as well. While it is not always possible to draw the exact line of demarcation, it is yet perfectly clear that ancestor worship is a particular form of soul-cult: soul-cult of the family, of kindred, and of the people.[1]

Numerous examples of ancestor worship are to be found among the Teutons. The heroic saga, to be sure, as it has come down to us in medieval epic poetry, is based on historical data and myths of nature, and has no connection with religious worship, but from Tacitus, Jordanes, and the genealogical tables we know[2] that the Teutons deified the progenitors of the various tribal groups, whereas later Norse literature did exactly the reverse: represented the gods euhemeristically as men of the prehistorical period.

Adam of Bremen, in a noteworthy passage,[3] tells us that the Swedes also worship men, "whom on account of their mighty deeds they endow with immortality." In illustration he refers to an example to be found in Rimbert's *Life of Anskar*, Chapter 26. We there find a detailed account how king Ericus became one of the gods. Anskar attended a large gathering at Birka, where he found king and people no longer favorably disposed, but fallen into great error. A man announced to the king and his people that he had been present at an assembly of the gods, at which the latter complained of the neglect into which their service had fallen owing to the spread of Christianity. "If you wish," so the gods are reported to have said, "to have a larger number of gods, and are not content with us alone, we herewith unanimously admit to our guild your former king Ericus, so that he be one of the company of gods." They thereupon built a temple for this new god, offered sacrifices, and made vows to him. The incident shows very clearly how,

[1] This distinction has not been sufficiently observed in the remarks concerning "ancestor worship" in CPB. I, 413–422.

[2] See above, pp. 79–81.

[3] *Gesta*, IV, 26.

in the declining days of paganism, hero worship was called upon to lend support to the service of the gods.

A nearer approach to a cult of souls and of the dead is made when we read, in Burchard of Worms, of "the offerings that in certain places are made at the tombs of the dead." While the reference is here, no doubt, to graves in general, Norse literature also furnishes some examples of the graves of particular persons. Thus we read of a king whose body was claimed by four different districts, "deeming that they who got it might look to have plenteous years therewith: so at last they agreed to share the body in four, and the head was laid in a mound at Stone, in Ringrick. Then each of the other districts took away its share, and laid it in a mound; and all the mounds are called Halfdan's mounds."[1] Especial importance seems here to be attached to the head, which is doubtless due to the fact that it is frequently regarded as the seat of the soul. This latter would also explain why in some localities headless corpses have been found.

[1] Saga of Halfdan the Black, *Heimskringla*, Chapter 9. The translation, slightly changed, is taken from the *Saga Library*, Vol. III.

CHAPTER XV

WALKYRIES, SWAN-MAIDENS, NORNS

These three groups of divine and semi-divine beings do not play an important part in the cult, traces of religious worship being confined almost entirely to the Norns. They owe their characteristic form in the main to the factitious mythology of the later Scandinavian period. At the same time Walkyries and Norns are not to be regarded as solely a creation of scaldic poetry. While their development is a later growth, it is rooted in old and genuine popular belief.

This popular basis is of a twofold nature. In the first place, there is a belief that in woman "there is something sacred and prophetic," so that she is able to divine the future and is possessed of magic powers. Hence also the counsel of such women as Veleda and Albruna was sought. Not that these were arbitrarily deified, like the Roman *divae* of the days of the Empire:[1] they were regarded as actually divine.[2] The ancient Teutons, accordingly, held women in high honor, and at times followed implicitly the leadership of an unusually gifted woman in battle. The fairy tale of the Teutonic kingdom of Amazons, repeated as late as the eighth century by Paulus Diaconus,[3] is certainly not of indigenous origin, but was invented by the Romans under the influence of the strong impression made upon them, from the days of the Cimbri until the age of the migrations, by the wild and warlike Teutonic women.

[1] "Nor as if they were deifying mortal women." Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 8.
[2] "They regard them as goddesses." Tacitus, *Hist.*, IV, 61.
[3] *Hist. Long.*, I, 15.

But the fact that Teutonic women were warlike and filled the functions of priest and soothsayer does not furnish a sufficient explanation of the belief in Walkyries and Norns. These latter are not deified women, but goddesses of war and fate, and these divine functions do not admit of an euhemeristic explanation. In war, as in the other affairs of life, there are divine disposing and controlling forces.

A third explanation might be sought in a phenomenon of nature. But we shall see that although there are points of contact between Walkyries and Norns and the world of nature,[1] their origin can by no means be derived from personifications of nature, such as goddesses of storms, water, and clouds.

The name "Walkyrie" is found in Norse and Anglo-Saxon only, although the *wâlriderske* ("rider of the dead," or mare) of Low-German popular belief has also been compared. The Walkyries are at work while the battle is raging; they choose the warrior that is to fall in the fight (Old Norse *valr*), and in their hand lies also the award of victory (Anglo-Saxon *sigewîf*). When in *Beowulf*[2] we read of *wígspéda gewiofu* (the weavings of victory), we involuntarily think of Walkyries (or Norns) as weavers. Walkyries, furthermore, place fetters on the prisoners, hold back the enemy, and release from their bonds the warriors of their own side, as is shown in the three groups of the first Merseburg Charm.[3] In this last instance we identified the German Idisi with Walkyries, because their functions were so closely allied. In like manner, the Norse Walkyries were doubtless accounted goddesses (*dísir*), even though not of the first rank, and we accordingly find that sacrifices (*dísablót*) were offered to them, as in *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 33. In any case there are two names of Norse Walkyries that remind us of the tasks assigned to the Idisi

[1] *Helgakvidha Hjǫrvardhssonar*, 28. [2] Line 698.
[3] See above, p. 128.

in the Merseburg Charm: Hlǫck (bond?), and Herfjǫtr ("host-fetter," *i.e.* terror that paralyzes).

In *Völuspa*, 31, *Grímnismál*, 36, and elsewhere, we find a number of names that we cannot with Golther regard altogether as the "product of gray theory." They represent poetic personifications of the goddesses of battle, and are neither more nor less living and real than such artificial elaborations of motifs from popular belief are wont to be. In German, too, there are numerous names of women that are reminiscent of the goddesses of battle and victory. A few may be mentioned of the long list given by Müllenhoff: Hilta, Hildeburc, Hiltigund, Gundrud, Sigithrud, Grimhilt, Brunihild, Gerdrud, Gerlind. If we are justified in applying these and other names to the Walkyries, they would be equipped with helmet, shield, cuirass, and spear, but not with sword. We meet them in groups of three, six, nine, twelve, and at times in three divisions.[1] They ride through the air, and even through the water; now and then their appearance upon the scene is accompanied by tempest and hail.

In connecting the Walkyries of the Viking period, on the one hand with the warlike Teutonic women of the ancient times, and on the other hand with the goddesses of battle and victory, it is to be admitted that the exact boundary line separating this conception from related ones is not always easily defined. We have in mind more particularly the shield-maidens,[2] who are repeatedly mentioned by Saxo. Three, or even three hundred, according to another account, of these *skjáldmeyjar* took part in the battle at Bravallir. Several of the martial women mentioned by Saxo are to be regarded as such *skjáldmeyjar*, among them "the maidens Sticla and Rusila," as well as some married women, like Gynritha, the mother of Harald Hildetand. Doubtless these characters represent

[1] First Merseburg Charm; *Helgakvidha Hjǫrvardhssonar*, 28.
[2] See above, p. 169.

in part historical personages. Rusila has by some been identified with the "red-haired maid" Inghen Ruaidh, who, according to an Irish chronicle, landed in Ireland at the head of a Viking fleet, in the tenth century.[1] While it is doubtful whether these heroines are to be taken as Walkyries, there are better grounds for such a supposition in the case of the "forest-maidens"[2] that call Hotherus by name and give him counsel, for in this instance we are told that, in invisible form, they are present in battle and award the victory. But they likewise foretell the future, and hence also remind one of Norns.

In the heroic sagas Walkyries are repeatedly mentioned both as valiant fighters, shield-maidens, of whom, for example, a large number perished at the burning of Atli's hall by Gudrun,[3] and as women endowed with supernatural powers, who foretell the future, ride through the air, and by their divine strength protect heroes. Such is the nature of Svava and of Sigrun, into whom Svava is reborn, in the Helgi Saga, as well as of Sigrdrifa-Brynhild, the godlike maid, won by Siegfried-Sigurdh in the Nibelungen Saga. The heroic saga does not, however, attach a sharply defined meaning to the term "Walkyrie": it merely designates the heroine of superhuman power. The hero who possesses himself of the person of such a Walkyrie becomes through that very fact preëminent among his fellows and a divine destiny awaits him. The statement[4] that Brynhild was to become an *óskmey* (wish-maiden, *i.e.* Walkyrie) is to be understood in this sense.

Norse mythology stands alone in clearly tracing the outlines of this conception of Walkyrie.[5] This has been effected mainly through a combination with Odhin and Walhalla: they are

[1] Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, I, 18 ff. See also A. Olrik, *Kilderne til Sakses Oldhistorie*, I, § 12.
[2] *Saxo*, HD. III, 112.
[3] *Atlakvidha*, 43.
[4] *Oddrúnargrátr*, 15.
[5] *Völuspa*, 31; *Grímnismál*, 36; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 36.

Odhin's "battle-maidens," execute his commands, protect his favorites, granting them victory, or conducting them to Walhalla. Here they wait upon the *Einherjar*, pass the beakers around, and replenish the jugs of ale. This connection with Walhalla, Odhin, and Freyja[1] is manifestly of secondary origin; Norse poetry has connected Odhin as god of war with the goddesses of victory, and has also developed the idea of Walhalla, the paradise of warriors. It would be idle, therefore, to seek in these later combinations traces of primitive nature-mythology, as is done by those scholars who connect the Walkyries as storm demons with Odhin as god of the wind.

We have already had occasion to discuss Walhalla and the Walkyries in connection with the *Eiriksmál* and the *Hákonarmál*.[2] In this latter song, king Hakon is represented as lying on the field of battle mortally wounded. He overhears the Walkyries, who with helmet and shield ride about on their steeds, saying that the gods have bidden him with a great host to Walhalla. The king asks why he had not been granted a victory, and receives as an answer that he had actually kept the field and routed the enemy, but that as a mighty hero he was now also to enter Walhalla, — a twofold favor according to the conception of the Norse scald.

A vivid picture of the activities of Walkyries is drawn by a song found in *Njalssaga*, Chapter 156. It consists of a description of Brian's battle, fought on Good Friday of the year 1014, in which many of those who had helped to burn Njal in his house were slain. On the one side fight Christian Irishmen, on the other half-heathen Norsemen. The poem contains numerous traces of current superstition, great importance being attached to all manner of apparitions. A man who on that day set out on horseback "saw folk riding twelve together to a bower, and there they were all lost to his sight. He went

[1] Freyja is even called Valfreyja in her function of welcoming slain heroes.
[2] See above, pp. 184 and 229.

to that bower and looked in through a window slit that was in it, and saw that there were women inside, and they had set up a loom. Men's heads were the weights, but men's entrails were the warp and weft, a sword was the shuttle, and the reels were arrows." He thereupon heard them sing the following song[1]:

THE WOOF OF WAR

See! warp is stretched
For warriors' fall;
Lo, weft in loom
'T is wet with blood;
Now fight foreboding,
'Neath friends' swift fingers,
Our gray woof waxeth
With war's alarms,
Our warp bloodred,
Our weft corseblue.

This woof is y-woven
With entrails of men,
This warp is hardweighted
With heads of the slain,
Spears blood-besprinkled
For spindles we use,
Our loom ironbound,
And arrows our reels;
With swords for our shuttles
This war-woof we work;
So weave we, weird sisters,
Our warwinning woof.

Now War-winner walketh
To weave in her turn,
Now Swordswinger steppeth,
Now Swiftstroke, now Storm;
When they speed the shuttle

[1] Dasent, *Burnt Njal*, II, pp. 338–341.

How spear-heads shall flash!
Shields crash, and helmgnawer[1]
On harness bite hard!

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof,
Woof erst for king youthful
Foredoomed as his own,
Forth now we will ride,
Then through the ranks rushing
Be busy where friends
Blows blithe give and take.

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof,
After that let us steadfastly
Stand by the brave king;
Then men shall mark mournful
Their shields red with gore,
How Swordstroke and Spearthrust
Stood stout by the prince.

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof;
When sword-bearing rovers
To banners rush on,
Mind, maidens, we spare not
One life in the fray!
We corse-choosing sisters
Have charge of the slain.

Now new-coming nations
That island shall rule,
Who on outlying headlands
Abode ere the fight;
I say that King mighty
To death now is done,
Now low before spearpoint
That Earl bows his head.

[1] "Helmgnawer," the sword that bites helmets.

Soon over all Ersemen
Sharp sorrow shall fall,
That woe to those warriors
Shall wane nevermore;
Our woof now is woven,
Now battle-field waste,
Oër land and oër water
War tidings shall leap.

Now surely 't is gruesome
To gaze all around,
When bloodred through heaven
Drives cloudrack oër head;
Air soon shall be deep hued
With dying men's blood
When this our spaedom
Comes speedy to pass.

So cheerily chant we
Charms for the young king,
Come maidens lift loudly
His warwinning lay;
Let him who now listens
Learn well with his ears,
And gladden brave swordsmen
With bursts of war's song.

Now mount we our horses,
Now bare we our brands,
Now haste we hard, maidens,
Hence far, far, away.

We may regard these maidens who determine the issue of battle as either Walkyries or Norns.

Walkyries appear frequently as swan-maidens. Agnar forced Brynhild and her seven sisters, *i.e.* companions, into his service by stealing and hiding their swan-shifts.[1] In *Völundarkvidha* we read of three Walkyries who had put their swan-shifts aside

[1] *Helreidh Brynhildar*, 7.

and were won by three brothers. After staying with them for seven years they flew away not to return. Both the Norse and the medieval German literature,[1] and the popular saga as well, constantly make mention of swan-maidens, who fly through the air, come swimming along to bring tidings, or through putting aside their swan-shift have come into the power of him who has taken it away. While not all of these swan-maidens are Walkyries, the latter are able to assume the form of swan-maidens, and when they do so the conception of battle and victory is usually lost sight of, while that of magic power and soothsaying gains in prominence.

The power that determines fate is personified in the Norns. It is not surprising that their functions can frequently not be distinguished from those of the Walkyries: the powers choosing those who are to be slain in battle are in the last instance identical with those that weave or spin the net of fate. Both are called *dísir*.[2] The belief in a power of fate, among the Teutons as among other peoples, is to be regarded as distinct from, and independent of, animism and nature-myth. We meet it on every hand in the Teutonic world. It has not, however, been developed through conscious reflection, and there is hence no need of drawing a distinction between such conceptions as chance, luck, fortune, fate, as has at times been attempted. We have already encountered a number of designations for this power of fate, the words at times indicating the gods themselves, such as *regin* and *metod*. The Anglo-Saxon *wyrd*, which possesses a cognate in the Norse *urdhr*, has also been noticed.[3] From the multiplicity of the decrees of fate it naturally follows that the disposing ones are likewise plural in number; they are light or dark beings, according to whether they dispose of the propitious or the unpropitious lots. They are frequently represented as three sisters bearing

[1] Herzeloide and Sigune in *Parzival* and *Titurel*.
[2] *Reginsmál*, 24; *Sigrdrifumál*, 9. [3] See above, p. 155.

various names: Einbet, Warbet, Wilbet; Chrischona, Ottilia, Margarita, etc., who are thereupon transformed into Christian saints, and even into representatives of *fides*, *spes*, *caritas*,[1] whereas popular belief identifies them with water and mountain nymphs, with ancient abbesses and ladies of the castle, and regards them as guardian fays. There is no ground whatever for identifying them with the Keltic *matronæ*. It is evident that all these features of popular belief do not date from pagan times any more than the belief that the medieval lady Sælde is a pagan goddess of fortune.[2] Here, as elsewhere, it is extremely difficult to ascertain from folklore the original and genuine heathen elements. The frequent recurrence of the number three is noteworthy. Norse literature has made these into Norns of the past, present, and future. Three Norns, or groups of Norns, are met with in numerous popular tales; so also in the witches of Macbeth, for there can scarcely be any doubt that these weird sisters represent Norns. Similarly in the songs of the Edda: according to *Völuspa*, 8, these three maids are descended from the giants, while both *Fáfnismál*, 13, and *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 15, make mention of three races of Norns, descendants respectively of Æsir, elves, and dwarfs (*dvalin*). This latter represents, no doubt, a later artificial form of tradition, which owes its origin to an effort to indicate the many-sidedness of their work and character, inasmuch as the divine disposition of fate, the various gifts of fortune such as are within the power of the elves, and the teasing, dangerous character of dwarfs are all attributes of the Norns. Aside from a few particulars that are of more recent origin, Snorri's account in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 15, reflects in a fairly accurate way the general Teutonic conception of the range of their activity: "These maidens appoint the fate of men and we call them Norns. There are, however, still other Norns (*i.e.* aside from the three already mentioned,

[1] "Faith, hope, and charity." [2] Jacob Grimm.

Urdhr, Verdhandi, and Skuld), who come to every new-born child and dispense its fate. . . . When the Norns determine the destinies of men, they divide the fortunes very unequally: to some they grant a life full of joy and honor, to others little happiness and glory; to some a long life, to others a short one. . . . The good Norns, who are of noble descent, dispense a happy fate. But if men fall upon misfortune, it is owing to evil Norns." They accordingly weave each man's destiny, in very unequal fashion. The figure usually employed to represent this is that of the loom with its threads. That the revolving wheel of fortune is of foreign origin is acknowledged also by Jacob Grimm.

The Norns bestow good fortunes and other noble gifts, but frequently also calamities. Their decrees are invariably irrevocable: "No one can withstand the word of Urdhr, even though it be spoken to one's destruction."[1] They furthermore accompany man through all the vicissitudes of life. They assist women at childbirth, keep watch over the new-born child, and weave its destiny:

In the mansion it was night:
The Norns came,
Who should the prince's
Life determine.
They him decreed
A prince most famed to be,
And of leaders
Accounted best.
With all their might they span
The fatal threads.
. . . . . .
They stretched out
The golden cord,
And beneath the middle
Of the moon's mansion fixed it.[2]

[1] *Fjolsvinnsmál*, 47.

[2] *Helgakvidha Hundingsbana*, I, 2, 3. (The translation, somewhat free, is that of Thorpe.)

Norns are frequently found at a child's cradle, bestowing gifts and foretelling the future. These Norns (or wise women) are usually three in number, two bringing or announcing a blessing, while the third, from a feeling of envy, or out of vengeance, because she has not been invited, adds something that vitiates the gifts of her sisters. How inexorable such oracular utterances are may be seen from the *Märchen* of Sleeping Beauty: the thirteenth (uninvited) wise woman there foretells that the princess will in her fifteenth year be wounded by a spindle and fall down dead. The twelfth wise woman, who happily has not as yet bestowed her gift, has no power to avert, but only to mitigate the curse: it was not to be death, but a sleep of a hundred years. Similarly, in a later Norse saga, Nornagestr, *i.e.* the guest of the Norns, had been promised the best of fortunes, but he was to die as soon as the candle should be burnt out that had just been lit. This has, of course, been regarded as a copy of the saga of Meleager, but unjustly so: the account does not contain a single feature that cannot be paralleled from Teutonic popular belief.

According to a tradition current among the inhabitants of the Faroe Islands, the white spots on the nails are tokens (*Nornaspor*) of the gifts that the Norns bestow. As at births, so at marriages, the Norns put in an appearance and grant a blessing. They likewise dispense the gloomy lot of death, and at times *wyrd*, *urdhr*, signifies simply the doom of death. We accordingly read of an *urdharmáni* (moon of weird), which appears as a sign that "the deaths of men will follow thereafter."[1] It is owing to the decrees of the Norns when a man falls in battle,[2] or dies in bed.[3] Popular belief at times regards this Norn of death as Hel, the black Griet, or the evil Margaretha, but these combinations of folklore are of too vague a character to demand serious consideration.

[1] *Eyrbyggjasaga*, Chapter 52. [2] *Hamdhismál*, 29.
[3] *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 52.

The Norns are also met with in the cult. Saxo[1] relates how king Fridlevus at the birth of his son Olavus desired to divine the future. He speaks of this "consultation of the oracles of the Parcæ" as of a rite which took place after a solemn offering of vows and prayer in the temple of the gods, where these "nymphæ" had their three seats. That the Norns received a meat-offering at the birth of a child may be gathered not only from the twelve plates which were prepared for the wise women at the birth of Sleeping Beauty, but also from the Norn-grits (*Nornagreytur*) of which on the Faroe Islands women partake after childbirth, no doubt originally a part of a sacrifice brought to the Norns. About the year 1000 Burchard of Worms still speaks of women who at certain times of the year set the table for the three sisters that are called the Parcæ and placed on it food and drink, together with three knives.

The Norse designation "Norns" has not as yet been satisfactorily explained. The true Norn is Urdhr, as is still clearly evident from the songs of the Edda, where she frequently occurs alone. To Urdhr there have subsequently been added[2] Verdhandi and Skuld, and the three were then brought into connection with the past, present, and future, — a connection which Müllenhoff[3] has even recognized in the general plan of *Völuspa*. It is a noteworthy fact that now and then the Norns are regarded as of the race of giants,[4] just as in the Greek theogonies the *Moiræ* belong to an older race of gods. It is in keeping with this, when the power of fate is stated to be older and stronger than that of the individual gods: *Völuspa*, 8, tells us that it was these three powerful maids that put an end to the happy life of the gods in the golden age. But such considerations should not be unduly emphasized, inasmuch as

[1] HD. VI, 272.
[2] *Völuspa*, 20 (interpolated); *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 15.
[3] DA. V, 5.
[4] *Völuspa*, 8; *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 49.

the occurrences on which they are based are only sporadic, and are besides found in the Norse sources alone, which, as we saw above, also give other accounts of the descent of the Norns alongside of that from the giants.

This is not the place to enter upon a discussion of the relation of the Norns to the world-tree. This whole conception will demand our attention later on, and we shall then see that it cannot be regarded either as an element of popular belief or as a part of genuine mythology.

CHAPTER XVI

ELVES AND DWARFS

HERE, as elsewhere, we must beware of depending upon uncertain etymologies for an elucidation of the character of the beings under consideration. The word "alp" (restricted at a later time to the meaning of "incubus," "nightmare") does not occur in German literature before the thirteenth century. It is, however, much older, as is shown by proper names of which it forms a part, *Albruna* being found even in Tacitus. The Anglo-Saxon *ælf* (plural *ylfe*) and the Norse *álfr* (plural *álfar*) also occur in proper names. The general use of the word "elf" in Germany dates only from the preceding century. Very widespread is the use of the word *wicht* (Norse *vættr*), which is also used as a neuter noun in the sense of "thing." Other names are: Norse *huldre*, *liuflingar*, English *fairies*, and, of foreign origin, *fées*. There are numerous other names, some of which we shall meet incidentally in the course of our discussion.

The elves play a most conspicuous part in the various phases of popular belief, such as *Märchen*, but they are also met with in the cult. Norse mythology, in its systematized form, which assigns such an important rôle to the giants in their struggle with the Æsir, while repeatedly mentioning elves and dwarfs, does not make them at all prominent. The *dvergatal* (catalogue of dwarfs), *Völuspa*, 9-16, is a later interpolation. Nor is the notion that the dwarfs owed their origin to maggots in the flesh of the giant Ymir[1] at all original. There are great differences between various kinds of elves in character and

[1] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 14.

outward appearance, although some features constantly recur. As a rule, they are frail and delicate, a countless host of little creatures, who have at times been observed to retreat trippingly across a bridge. Some elves are of dazzling beauty, and elf maids and wives are represented as combing their long blond hair. They lead a merry life over games, dance, and song. The dwarfs, on the other hand, are misshapen creatures: ugly, hunchbacked, and club-headed. Sometimes, but only by way of exception, they are said to possess a form other than human, such as that of a bull. At sunrise they turn to stone.[1]

The relation of elves and dwarfs to man is a peculiar one. At times they are kindly disposed, bestowing gifts that, while apparently insignificant, prove of great value, healing people of sickness, and teaching them the hidden virtues of stones and plants. On the other hand, they are also playful and mischievous, given to teasing and deceit, and they may even become malicious and dangerous. Thus they bewitch man and beast and bring about sickness. Their shot (*elveskud*) causes death. They entice and kidnap girls and exchange children (*Wechselbalg*, changeling). In *Ruodlieb*[2] a captured dwarf who is taunted with deceitfulness retorts as follows:

> Far from it that such deceit ever obtained among us; we should not else be either so long lived or so healthy. Among you one opes his lips only when deceit is in his heart; hence you will never reach a mature old age, for the length of each one's life is in proportion to his sincerity. We speak naught else than what lies in our hearts. Nor do we eat various kinds of food that give rise to maladies. Hence we shall continue in unimpaired health longer than you.[3]

While it is somewhat difficult to determine just what elements of genuine popular belief these lines contain, the contrast

[1] *Alvíssmál.*

[2] A Latin poem of the tenth century. The lines are cited by Grimm in his *Mythology.*

[3] *Ruodlieb*, XVII, 18.

between the candor of dwarfs and the deceitfulness of man certainly does not bear this character. On the other hand, the long and healthy life of dwarfs must doubtless be included in the above category, although it is here not, as elsewhere, ascribed to a knowledge of the secret powers of nature, but to truthfulness and a simple mode of life.

Elves frequently call upon man for aid, more especially to assist elf-wives in labor. Through marriages with men, elves, especially water-sprites (nixes), seek to acquire an immortal soul. There is, however, always danger that this design may miscarry, chiefly through the imprudence of the man, who fails to regard the injunction that he may not call his elf-wife by name, or see her naked. In such a case the elf must return to her element. The well-known tales of Undine and Melusine, and numerous other stories of the same type, will occur to every one in this connection. A touching story is told of a water-sprite. Children called out to him: "Why do you sit there, nix (neck), and play? You will never be saved." The nix began to weep bitterly, cast his harp aside, and disappeared in the water. When the father learned what had happened, he reproved his children and bade them return forthwith and console the nix. They did so and called out to him, "Your redeemer also lives." The nix then again played sweetly on the harp. Though these and similar conceptions of popular belief may have a Christian coloring, and have acquired in modern poetry a deeper meaning, which no longer bears a pagan character, there is at least a nucleus, which cannot be accurately defined, that goes back to pagan belief. We cite, therefore, although with considerable reservation, the beautiful words with which Grimm concludes his chapter on elves and dwarfs: "Through the entire character of elves, nixes, and goblins there runs an undercurrent of dissatisfaction and disconsolateness: they do not quite know how to turn their noble gifts to good account, and are always more or less dependent upon man. . . .

Hence too their doubt whether they can become partakers of salvation, and their unrestrained grief when they receive a negative answer."

Snorri, in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 17, draws a distinction between *ljósálfar* and *dǫkkálfar*: "The light-elves are outwardly brighter than the sun, while the dark-elves are blacker than pitch." The former dwell in Alfheim, which in *Grímnismál*, 5, is stated to be the home of Freyr. Elsewhere as well, as in *Skírnismál*, 7, light-elves and Æsir are associated. *Dǫkkálfar* are at times identified with dwarfs, so in *Skáldskaparmál*, Chapter 3; at other times, as in *Fáfnismál*, 13, and *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 14 and 15, dwarfs are mentioned separately and are expressly distinguished from the race of elves. Many scholars accordingly, following in the footsteps of Grimm,[1] assume alongside of the light- and dark- elves a third class, the *svartálfar*, who are then considered identical with the dwarfs. But this whole attempt at systematization is doubtless the artificial work of Norse mythographers. We shall do better, therefore, to distinguish these beings with reference to their habitation and the sphere of their activity. They are connected with light and sky, with field and forest, with water, with subterranean regions, and with the house.

Generally the place where elves live and work is situated on the earth. There they appear in visible form, or sweep past, at times only audible, in a wild train, carrying in their midst some woman or child that they have stolen.[2] Unlike the Wild Hunt, which courses through the air, this procession passes over field and heath. There are, however, also features that establish an unmistakable connection between the elves and the air and sunlight. They effect an entrance through the rays of the sun, are clad in white garments, and possess a radiant, dazzling beauty. Snorri[3] assigns to these light-elves a dwelling

[1] DM.[4], p. 368. [2] *Ir. Elf.* XXVI.
[3] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 17.

in a hall on the mountain of Gimle, where, according to *Völuspa*, 64, in the regenerated world, "the hosts of the righteous shall dwell, and forever abide in bliss." If it be contended that Snorri has put these light-elves in the place of angels and the souls of the blessed, there yet must have been, in the conceptions entertained concerning elves, a connecting link that made such a substitution possible.

Like the Greeks and many other peoples, the Teutons also conceived nature as peopled with hosts of animate beings. In forest and field there are found *Wilde Leute*, *Fanggen*, *Holz-* and *Moosfräulein*, the *Hollunderfrau*, the *Hyllemor* (Danish), the *Skogsfru* (Swedish). Besides, there are male beings, such as *Waldmännlein*, *Nörgen*, *Schrat*. As late an author as Burchard of Worms speaks of "rustic women, who are called wood-wives (*silvatice*), and who are said to possess a bodily form. They say that they make themselves visible to their lovers whenever they wish and that they divert themselves with them, and again that they steal away and disappear whenever they wish." In this same connection we may refer to the well-known and widely current story of the *Waldfräulein*, the so-called *Windsbraut*, that was pursued by the wild man. The wild and savage elements are in the case of wood-sprites made far more prominent than the pleasing features.

There is also a class of spirits that promote the fruitfulness of the field: *Kornmumme*, *Roggenhund*, *Haferbock*, *Getreidemann*, and numerous others including also the *Feensleute* and fairies that on the newly ploughed field bake cake for the men at work. Other beings do damage to the crops, especially the Pilwiz or Bilwis, who is repeatedly mentioned in medieval literature, and who devastates the fields, teases men, and tangles their hair.

Not in the case of all of these beings are there sufficient grounds for classing them among the elves. The demons of vegetation, whom we know through folklore, are not considered as such. At the same time it is difficult to draw a

hard and fast line, and there is no doubt that the elves are also to be found in field and forest, that they promote the fruitfulness of the soil, and dance on field and meadow (elf-dance). The spot where the grass grows luxuriantly is called a "fairy circle." He who tramples this grass under foot becomes blind, or the elves breathe sickness and death upon him. Thus we read in Shakespeare's *Tempest* (V, 1):

> You demi-puppets that
> By moonshine do the green-sour ringlets make
> Whereof the ewe not bites.

An important class of elves are the water-elves, or nixes, to whom incidental reference has already been made. They are usually small of stature, represented at times as enticingly beautiful women, whose song bewitches, at times as bearded men with green hat and green teeth. Frequently they are invisible, or are seen emerging from lake or spring, or their voice is heard from the depths of the lake, where lie also the sunken bells (named Anne Susanne) that come to the surface at St. John's.

The worship of water occupied a prominent place in the Teutonic religion; it was regarded as a purifying, rejuvenating, as well as a soothsaying element, and was accordingly conceived of as inhabited by various beings. Sea and waterfall were usually thought to be the abode of giants, although, in the Introduction to *Reginsmál*, we also find the dwarf Andvari dwelling in a waterfall. Lakes and springs were regarded as the home of elves, especially so in Thuringia, the Black Forest (*Mummelsee*), and some other localities.

The water-elves pass under numerous names: *nix*, *neck*, *nicor*[1] (Anglo-Saxon), *marbendill* (Icelandic), *meermin*, *meermeit* (mermaid), *meerwip*, *waterman* and *watervrouw*, *muhme*, *mümmelchen*, etc. The Danish *havmænd* and *havfruer* are used

[1] Hence the appellation "Old Nick" for the devil in England.

to designate giants as well as elves. In popular tales the soothsaying character of the water-elves is made especially prominent.[1] Thus the mermaids, with the upper half of their body above the water, give expression to oracular utterances in song. Similarly, the merman, on being caught, regains his liberty by foretelling the future to his captor. Nicks are likewise summoned to bring about the accomplishment of wishes. The best-known example of this is contained in the fairy tale of Grimm, *Von dem Fischer un syner Fru*,[2] all of whose wishes were realized by the

> Manntje, Manntje, Timpe Te,
> Buttje, Buttje in der See,

until finally the woman wished to become like unto the dear Lord himself, and was thereupon suddenly carried back to her former home in the "Pissputt." Of a similar character is the story of the king on the Danube, who inquired of people what their wishes were, and thereupon cast them in the water, where all these wishes would be realized.

Water nicks are, therefore, by no means harmless. They draw men, in part by seduction, in part by force, down to the depths: "Half drew she him, half sank he down."[3] Traces of blood on or near the water are signs of vengeance that they have exacted. They hold numerous men as prisoners, who have come into their power through a draught of water, or by playing or dancing with them. These warn others against a similar fate, but usually in vain. As a rule, it is impossible to free these prisoners: at times people suppose this end to be accomplished by making a small, flat stone skip and jump back over the water. Nicks that roam about among mankind are recognizable by the wet skirt of their dress.

[1] Examples from the Netherlands are cited by J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge*, II, 286.
[2] "The Story of the Fisherman and his Wife," *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, No. 19.
[3] Goethe's *Fischer*.

Dwarfs closely resemble the elves in character, and one of their kings bears, in fact, the name of Alberich. They dwell in the mountains and under the earth. The mountains they share as a place of habitation with the giants and souls, but the dwarfs preferably dwell there where treasures are hidden and where mining is being carried on. This latter occupation men have learned from the dwarfs. Their voice may be heard to answer in the mountains: the echo is called *dwerga mál* (the speech of dwarfs) in Old Norse. There is no certainty as to the etymology of the word "dwarf"; other names by which they are known are: *bergmannetjes*, *aardmannetjes*, *underjordiske*. They are invariably small of stature, at times not larger than a man's thumb, ugly, old, bearded, gray, filthy, misshapen, at times club-headed, and with feet like those of geese. By means of a cloak or cap that is called *Tarnkappe*, or dwarf-hat, they are able to make themselves invisible. In their own realm, under the ground or in the mountains, they lead a merry life with song and dance. Medieval poetry and popular tales mention a number of names of dwarf kings: Goldemar, Laurin, Gibich (Harz region), Hans Heiling (Bohemia). They are frequently dangerous, kidnapping children, or carrying off beautiful maidens, incidents which medieval German poetry has at times combined with stories dealing with Dietrich of Bern and the motif of the Rosengarten.[1] In *Märchen* the girl is compelled to marry the ugly dwarf who has aided her in her task, unless she should know his name on the following day. Fortunately the dwarf himself betrays this name through singing out aloud that he is so glad that no one knows that he is called *Rumpelstilzchen* (*Purzinigele* in Tyrol, *Tom-Tale-Tit* in England), — another illustration, therefore, of the quest after ties of human relationship that is so characteristic of the elves. Dwarfs are not, however, invariably malicious: witness the kind-hearted dwarfs that so carefully tend little Snow-White.

[1] Symons, GH.², § 48.

Dwarfs are rich and are skilful artificers, especially as smiths, the most famous swords of the Norse sagas being the handiwork of dwarfs. Wieland (Völund), the smith, is called an elf-king,[1] and the incidents of the ravishing of the maiden and of the ring whose possession confers superhuman power, from the same saga, are also elfish in character.[2] An old fire-demon has been fused with the dwarf of this saga.[3]

Of the great skill of the dwarfs, the account in the Snorra Edda (*Skáldskaparmál*, Chapter 3) affords the most striking example. The sons of Ivaldi there fashion for Loki the golden hair of Sif, the ship Skidhbladhnir that is given to Freyr, and the spear Gungnir, which Odhin possesses. In a wager with Loki two other dwarfs succeed in forging three objects that show a still more consummate skill: the ring Draupnir for Odhin, from which every ninth night eight rings of equal weight will drop; for Freyr, the boar with the golden bristles, which is speedier than a horse, can run through air and water, and sheds light in the darkest night; for Thor, the greatest of all treasures, the hammer Mjǫllnir. This account conveys the impression that the author had different groups of dwarfs in mind, and similarly, in the dwarf catalogue, *Völuspa*, 9–16, the more than fifty names are arranged in three divisions, while in *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 14, some dwarfs are said to dwell in the earth, others in the rocks, still others go "through marshy valleys to sandy plains." We find in this latter list dwarfs who take their names from the four points of the compass. Alongside of some that are unknown to us, we also meet others that occur elsewhere, such as Regin and Andvari.

Closely related to the dwarfs are the spirits of house and home, passing under such names as *Kobold* (*Kabouter*), *Heinzelmännchen*, *Wichtelmännchen*, *Poltergeist*, *Rumpelgeist*, *Popanz*, *Bullerkater*, *Butzemann*, *Tatermann*, *Claus*. In England and

[1] *Völundarkvidha*, 11. [2] See O. L. Jiriczek, DH. I, 9.
[3] See p. 145, above.

along the coast of the North Sea we also meet with the names "puck," "brownie," "good fellow," and others. The *Kobold*, as a rule, likes to lend a helping hand in the field and stable; he feeds the cattle and threshes the grain, fetches water, and performs all manner of domestic duties. At the same time he is also capable of teasing, but, as a rule, only those who have deserved punishment. On account of the riches possessed by dwarfs, such domestic spirits, or *Alraunen*, as they are sometimes called, may bestow a blessing of money upon a particular house. What the *Kobold* is for the house the *Klabautermann*, or *Kalfatermann*, is for the ship.

Elf-cult is repeatedly mentioned. In the Norse sagas we read of sacrifices to the elves (*álfablót*, frequently consisting of a bull), from which good fortune or restoration to health were expected. In Sweden, likewise, bloody sacrifices of animals were made to the elves, on altars consecrated to their worship. These offerings usually took place on Thursday and at Yuletide, a period of the year with which numerous cult observances are connected. Gifts to the elves are also met on every hand in popular customs: people brought them offerings of porridge, bread, cake, and beer, placed a coin on a stone or threw it in the water. We likewise meet with various usages that are designed to ward them off or keep them at a distance. Elves and dwarfs abhor uncleanliness, and they may hence be driven away by human excrements (*álfrek*), by spitting straight ahead, or by pungent herbs. Elves and children of elves (changelings) may also be driven off by means of water that has been boiled in eggshells. If one wishes to capture them, the keyhole must be stopped up, or they must be held fast by the hair. There are, in addition, numerous magic formulas and incantations that may be used for forcing elves to withdraw, or for safeguarding oneself against any peril that their presence might cause.[1]

[1] Grimm, DM.[4], III, 504, No. 42.

CHAPTER XVII

GIANTS

As compared with the elves, the giants maintain a less constant intercourse with mankind, and are to a lesser extent objects of worship. They are, however, equally well represented in the *Märchen*, take a more active part in the heroic saga, and also play a far more important rôle in Norse mythology. They are personifications of savage, untamed natural forces, such as the storm and the wild roaring sea. Their real home is, accordingly, in regions that are mountainous and near the coast, in Tyrol and Norway, and to a slighter degree in England and the plains of Northern Germany. Giants are on the whole invested with a more pronounced individuality than the elves: they usually appear singly, less often in groups or large collective bodies. Not a few giants, especially those of particular mountains, such as Watzmann and Pilatus, are wholly bound to a single spot, and may be regarded as mythical personifications of specific localities. It frequently happens, therefore, that giants and elves (dwarfs) inhabit, though in a different manner, the same realms of nature. Nor are they always kept entirely distinct. Regin and Fafnir are brothers, but the former is represented as a dwarf, the latter as a giant.

The following designations for giants may be noted: 1. Old Norse *jǫtunn* (plural *jǫtnar*), Anglo-Saxon *eoten*, Swedish *jätte;* 2. Old Norse *thurs* (Middle High German *türse*); 3. Swedish *troll;* 4. German *Riese;* 5. Anglo-Saxon *ent;* 6. *hüne* (in Westphalia and part of Drenthe). Here and there we also meet the loan word *gigant*. To designate giantesses the Old Norse employs *gýgr*.

Giants differ greatly in form and stature; their general characteristics are a huge body and superhuman strength. They are frequently beautiful: witness Gerdhr, Skadhi, and numerous other giantesses who move the hearts of both gods and men to love. There are also monsters among their number, with many heads[1] and hands, one-eyed, ugly, misshapen, and repulsive. The dogs and wolves that bring about the eclipses of sun and moon (Managarmr, Hati, Skǫll) are also thought of as giants, and such names as Kǫtt (tom-cat), Hyndla (bitch), Trana (crane), Kraka (crow), likewise contain a reference to animal shape.

The traits of character that are ascribed to giants reveal similar contradictions. They are kind of heart and possess a childlike joyousness, but are also uncouth and awkward. They possess a great store of wisdom, as *e.g.* Vafthrudhnir, who is visited by Odhin, and Hyndla, who informs Freyja concerning the genealogies, but their knowledge differs in character from the shrewdness and nimbleness of the elves and dwarfs. They are preëminently faithful: *tryggr* (faithful as a giant) became proverbial. They reward services done them, but if their wrath (*jǫtunmódhr*) has been provoked, nothing is secure against their violent onslaughts.

These various phases in the character of giants, their faithfulness and kind-heartedness as well as their frightful wrath, play a part also in *Märchen*. They are immoderate in the use of food and drink, and at times hanker after human flesh, as in the tale of Tom Thumb. Their hostility to agriculture is likewise frequently mentioned, — a trait that is not at all surprising in the case of spirits representing the forces of wild and inhospitable nature.

> By the elements is hated
> What is formed by mortal hands.[2]

[1] *Hymiskvidha*, 35.
[2] Schiller, *Lied von der Glocke* (translation of H. D. Wireman).

This antithesis between giants and tillers of the soil is encountered in numerous sagas, as *e.g.* in that well-known story from Alsatia in which the daughter of a giant playfully captures a farmer in the act of ploughing and puts him in her apron, and is greatly delighted with her new-found toy. But her father admonishes her that this is not a fit toy, for if the farmer does not till the soil bread will be lacking also in the rocky castle of the giant.

Giants are famous builders. They do not produce works of art like the dwarfs, but colossal structures, castles, walls (compare the Cyclopean walls of antiquity), *hünenbedden*, roads built from blocks of stone, and bridges across rivers.[1] Under this same category falls also the account[2] of the giant builder of the burgh of the Æsir to which reference has repeatedly been made.[3]

We now turn to a consideration of the giants as identified with the various domains of nature. There are first of all the water giants. The North Sea is especially rich in these: Grendel and his mother from *Beowulf*[4] and Wate from *Kudrun*[5] will at once occur to the reader. In part they are monsters, like the eight-handed giant of the Alu waterfalls in Norway, and Starkad,[6] who has been blended with the hero of the saga. The shape of horses and bulls assumed by giants is also of common occurrence, the former, for example, in the case of the giantess Hrimgerdhr.[7] The Midhgardh-serpent and the Fenris-wolf are likewise examples of sea monsters belonging to the race of giants. With the former we may compare the stories abounding in sea lore of sea-serpents that have been seen rising to the surface.

Chief among the sea giants is Ægir (called also Hler and

1 Examples are given by Grimm, DM.[4], p. 453, and Golther, GM., p. 165.
2 *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 42.
3 See above, p. 277.
4 See above, p. 159.
5 See above, p. 177.
6 See above, p. 166.
7 *Helgakvidha Hjǫrvardhssonar*, 20.

Gymir), whose name the scalds in a few instances even employed appellatively to designate the sea. His relations with the Æsir are of the most friendly character: he prepares a banquet for them at which Fimafengr and Eldir are the attendants,[1] and is in turn Odhin's guest[2] on Hlesey, the isle of Hler. He is generally regarded as personifying the calm open sea. Less benign in nature is his kin. His wife is the fierce Ran, who with her net draws drowning men to the depths. She is the death deity of the sea. The nine daughters of Ægir and Ran represent, as is evident from their names,[3] the surf and the turbulent waves of the sea. Gerdhr too is called a daughter of the giant Gymir, and her beauty is highly extolled, but there is nothing in the myth of her union with Freyr that suggests the water demon; on the contrary, it is rather reminiscent of the earth in springtime.

The principal water giants that play a rôle in the god-myths have already been mentioned. Among them was the wise Mimir, between whose wisdom and his character as water demon there is doubtless a connection. The inhospitable nature of the sea is personified in Hymir,[4] who with frosty beard dwells in the midst of icy peaks, as is graphically told in the Eddic song that bears his name. The myth itself has been treated under the head of Thor. Hymir should not be identified with the primeval giant Ymir, who is also associated with the water, but whose chief place is in the cosmogony. Fenja and Menja,[5] the giantesses with the quern, are likewise to be classed among the water demons.

The wind giants are no less numerous, although not all beings that move about in the air are to be grouped under this category, certainly not Odhin with the souls constituting his train. There is an utter lack of such evidence as would con-

[1] *Lokasenna.* [2] *Bragarœdhur.*
[3] See Weinhold, *Die Riesen des germanischen Mythus*, SWA., 26, 242.
[4] *Hymiskvidha* and *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 48. [5] See above, p. 165.

nect the Wild Hunt with the giants, and the views of those more recent mythologists who assume such a relationship are erroneous. Nor are the demons of vegetation, mentioned under the rubric "Elves" to be classed as wind giants. With greater show of reason, certain poetical expressions used by the scalds for the wind, such as *hrjótr* (shatterer), *bani* (slayer), *skadhi* (harm), might be cited under this head, but the personification contained in these *kenningar* is after all of too incomplete a character to serve as the basis for such conclusions.

The wind giants are really storm giants, so *e.g.* Ecke and Vasolt of the German heroic saga, with whom Dietrich of Bern enters into combat. Norse mythology boasts of a large number of wind giants. Thrym and Thjazi, who in the shape of an eagle carries off Loki, have before been referred to. At the edge of heaven, in the form of an eagle, sits Hræsvelg, who sets the sea in motion and fans the flames of fire.[1] Kari causes ice and snow, and in general wind giants are frequently giants of winter, *hrímthursar*, rime or frost giants, several names being compounds that have *hrím* as first component part. Hrungnir has also been counted among the wind giants, because he rides on the stallion Gullfaxi, but the myth dealing with him is even less simple and transparent than those of Geirrödhr and Suttungr, which we discussed in connection with Thor and with Odhin. In these and other accounts the elaboration of the story-motif at the hands of the mythographers and poets has entirely obscured the nucleus of original nature-myth which they may contain. It is, at any rate, impossible to determine to what sphere of nature these giants belong.

The mountain giants (*bergrisar*), although necessarily restricted to definite localities, are very numerous. By their fantastic and grotesque forms certain rocks involuntarily suggest the idea of petrified giants, and stories are accordingly told of savage giant kings who on account of their cruelty were

[1] *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 37, and *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 18.

changed into rocks. On the other hand, we also hear of benevolent giants and giantesses inhabiting the mountains, such as Dofri and his daughter Fridhr in Norway.[1] While giants also dwell in the forest, there are hardly any instances of individual forest giants.

There is no need of continuing this enumeration of giants. Among them are some figures that belong only in part to the race of giants; thus Jǫrdh and Rindr are sometimes classed among the giantesses and again among the Asynjur.[2] The giants of night and day that inhabit Jǫtunheim do not rest on a basis of popular belief: their genealogy is artificial.[3]

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that giants in general did not constitute an integral part of popular belief. Such was most decidedly the case, the more so because they were, even to a greater extent than the elves, identified with definite localities. They stand in all manner of relations to mankind, friendly as well as hostile, but are generally feared and held in awe. There are, however, only slight traces of giant cult, too slight to warrant the conclusion that there existed at an earlier period a widespread giant worship. Giants are invoked now and then in incantations, as *e.g.* Vasolt in a weather charm of the eleventh century, and a certain Tumbo, who is called upon to heal wounds and to staunch blood. In Norway a certain giant, Dumbr, is styled *heitgudh* (*i.e.* a god who is invoked) and *bjargvættr* (guardian spirit), and in the Kormaks Saga, Chapter 27, a *blótrisi* (a giant to whom sacrifices are made) is mentioned, whose indigenous character is, however, not above suspicion. Finally, in the North, at Yuletide, beer is also brought to the giants' hill for the giants.

It is of more importance, therefore, to inquire what position literature has assigned to the giants. Norse literature has provided them with a systematic genealogy: they are descended

[1] *Kjalnesingasaga*, Chapters 12 and 14. [2] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 36.
[3] See *Vafthrúdhnismál*, and *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 10.

from Fornjotr (the ancient giant), whose three sons, Hler, Logi, and Kari, represent respectively water, fire, and wind, a trilogy, accordingly, that is parallel to that found in the world of the gods. This genealogy is unquestionably specifically Norse, the parallels among other Teutons that have been claimed for it being extremely weak. Its home is in the region of the Cattegat. Norr, also, the eponymous hero of Norway, is stated to be a descendant of this ancient giant. Kari is furthermore made the ancestor of a number of semi-personified beings, the appellative origin of whose names is still perfectly clear. They are: Jǫkull (glacier), Frosti (cold), Snær (mountain snow), Fǫnn (heap of snow), Drifa (snow-whirl), Mjǫll (snow-dust). A number of these personifications of nature are at the same time thought of, in euhemeristic fashion, as ancient kings, of whom various stories are told and whom numerous Norwegian families regard as their progenitors. Sporadically we also find Fornjotr identified with Ymir, from whom the giants are descended according to *Hyndluljódh*, 34, and again with Thrivaldi or with Allvaldi, the father of Thjazi.[1]

The home of the giants was regarded as lying in the northeast, or, at a later time, in the southeast. A distinction is sometimes drawn between Jǫtunheim and Risaland. In *Alvíssmál*, the giants, like the Æsir, Vanir, and dwarfs, have separate and distinct designations for beings and objects. Similarly, things have different names with Hel and with men, but these five or six different languages are mere scaldic fiction.

In both the Eddic poems and the Snorra Edda essentially different conceptions regarding giants frequently stand side by side, or are even commingled. The part giants play in the cosmogony (viz. Ymir) and in the eschatology (viz. Surtr) will receive consideration in the following chapter.

In both Eddas the conception of kinship and close relationship between giants and Æsir is dominant. Odhin and his

[1] *Hárbardhsljódh*, 19; *Bragarœdhur*, Chapter 2.

brothers constitute a younger race that has succeeded the giants.[1] Tyr is the son of Hymir[2]; Thor and Vali have as their mothers the giantesses Jǫrdh and Rindr, respectively. Thor, notwithstanding the fact that he is the sworn enemy of numerous giants, yet greatly resembles them, and Loki too is of their race, and is, in fact, even designated "the giant."[3] The Æsir have intercourse with giantesses, — Odhin with several, Freyr with Gerdhr, Njǫrdhr with Skadhi. Odhin seeks wisdom from Vafthrudhnir, and Mimir is his friend. Freyja visits Hyndla in her cave to learn hidden things.

But in the myths to which we alluded in the above résumé the giants and Æsir also frequently appear as each other's enemies. In the case of Thor and Loki, the mere mention of their names will suffice to make this fact evident. The union between Freyr and the giantess Gerdhr is condemned by Æsir and elves alike.[4] Eddic mythology is full of the struggle between Æsir and giants, the latter ever showing a keen desire to get Freyja in their power. It is noteworthy that the giants have no share in the death of Baldr. Nor do they play an important rôle in the final catastrophe, except in so far as the monsters, the Midhgardh-serpent and the Fenris-wolf, are to be accounted of their number.

At first blush it would seem that these two conceptions of the relationship between Æsir and giants are contradictory, and that we must choose between two alternatives: either that the giants are an older race of gods, or that they are the expression of a dualistic conception of the world. It is to be noticed, however, that in Greek mythology also we find the same two notions: the Titans are the older race from which the Olympians have sprung, and with whom they have to battle, the new order of things being established only after the supreme Olympian, Zeus, has entered into union with the Titanides,

[1] *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 6.
[2] *Hymiskvidha.*
[3] *Völuspa*, 54.
[4] *Skirnismál*, 7.

Themis and Mnemosyne. While Norse mythology has not been moulded by a power of art and thought such as that which created the figure of Prometheus for the Greeks, yet these two aspects found in the Greek Titans are also present in the Norse giants: they represent the hostile forces as well as the ancient and the immutable ones: the Norns are the mighty maids from Thursenheim.[1] Such conceptions as these lie at hand, and there is no need of supposing them to have been introduced from foreign sources by scalds and mythographers. The scalds have merely drawn the giants, who are properly figures of the "lower" mythology, within the sphere of the poetic and systematized mythology. They are the same ancient and wise beings that play a part in popular belief, from whom, accordingly, even the gods have something to learn. They also represent the wild and untamed forces of nature, with which the gods come into conflict. An absolute or philosophic dualism, as chaos and order, matter and spirit, or good and evil, the Norse mythographers certainly did not have in mind, or at least only in so far as Christian ideas had influenced their own conceptions.

The medieval heroic saga has made use of giants in a variety of ways. King Rother has several savage giants among his following: Asprian who slays a lion, Widolt who is led about on an iron chain, and others. There is also a Lombard saga in which the giants bear a close resemblance to Berserkers. Giants are furthermore made to do duty as watchmen at the gates of castles or as guardians of treasures, at times in the shape of dragons. In several accounts of combats the motif of a struggle between giants is unmistakably present, as in the stories connected with the Alpine region of Tyrol, which have been transferred to the cycle of Dietrich of Bern[2] (Ecke, Vasolt, etc.), and in the narratives dealing with the faithless warriors, Witege and Heime. Here, as elsewhere, a mythical

[1] *Völuspa*, 8. [2] See Jiriczek, DH. I, 185 ff.

element has blended with the historical saga. Another original and very old motif is that of the wise giant who brings up young heroes. In German poetry this motif has been crowded into the background, but such is not the case with Norse literature. In the songs of the Edda and in the Vǫlsunga Saga Sigurd is reared by Regin and Fafnir, and Harald Fairhair similarly spent his youth with the giant Dofri.[1] According to Saxo, Hadding also is brought up by a giant, but this belongs to a somewhat different type of story, viz. those picturing relations of love between heroes and daughters of giants.[2]

[1] *Flateyarbók*, I, 564.

[2] Additional examples may be found in A. Olrik, *Kilderne til Sakses Oldhistorie*, I, 40–43.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WORLD

Cosmogony, Cosmology, and Eschatology

In Norse mythology alone do we find cosmogonical and eschatological views systematically developed. Beginning with the cosmogony, to which this observation applies with especial force, it seems proper to treat the Norse conception not merely in its elaborated form, but also to examine separately the various elements that have entered into it. Before considering, therefore, the artificial structure that owes its existence to the efforts of the Norse mythographers, it is necessary to inquire whether for some of its features parallels can be found elsewhere in the Teutonic world. It would be very singular indeed if such parallels did not exist, for notions concerning the origin of man and the world are of well-nigh universal occurrence. Although such data are rare among the Teutons, they are yet not altogether wanting. From the lament of the Anglo-Saxon nobles concerning their ignorance of the origin of things,[1] we are as little justified in inferring that all conceptions of this kind were lacking among the Teutons, as an opposite conclusion would be justified on the basis of the answer of the great Chlodowech, when his wife attempted to persuade him to have their little son baptized: "All things are created by the decree of our gods."[2] Such anecdotes, even supposing that they are genuine and have not been retouched to any great extent, prove very little. The

[1] See above, p. 152.

[2] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, II, 29.

correspondence between certain lines of the so-called Wessobrunn Prayer and the third strophe of *Völuspa* would at first view seem to possess greater significance, but in our previous discussion of this matter we have already seen that there is no warrant for recognizing in this German monument a fragment of genuine pagan cosmogony.[1]

The points of agreement of which we are in search are in fact very few; and we must accordingly make the most of what is actually found. One such parallel we recognize in the account given by Tacitus[2] of the sacred saline streams near the Saale. At that river, in spots where the tribes in question thought themselves in especially close proximity to the gods, the salty water was made to evaporate on burning coals, salt being thus obtained "from two opposing elements, fire and water." With this we may compare the account in *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 5 and 6, where the elements of water and fire also play a rôle in the cosmogony, and where the cow Audhumla licks the salty stones. While the correspondence is hardly close enough to allow us to see in this passage of Tacitus additional evidence for "the creation of the world out of the elements,"[3] it is yet worthy of note that creation from heterogeneous elements and the significance of salt are features that Tacitus and the Norse cosmogony have in common.

There is one other important document to which Kauffmann, in this connection, was the first to call attention. It is a long and detailed letter addressed by the bishop Daniel of Winchester (about A.D. 720) to Boniface, and containing advice regarding his mission work in Central Germany. The bishop admonishes Boniface that the preaching should not be at haphazard, but that the missionary should give evidence that he is acquainted with the cult and legends of the heathen. Boniface is accordingly counselled to attack the contradictions

[1] See above, p. 130. [2] *Annals*, XIII, 57.
[3] Uhland, *Schriften*, VII, 479.

and absurdities of the pagan ideas concerning the gods and the origin of the world. Either the world was created, or it existed from the beginning. If created, by whom? By gods that themselves were begotten, and that before the creation had no possible place of habitation? If without beginning, who then ruled the world before the birth of the gods? While little can be gathered from this letter concerning the actual content of the current pagan ideas, it yet seems clear that these heathen Germans busied themselves with the problem of the origin of things.

However meagre these German parallels may appear to be, they would seem to afford a sufficient basis for the assumption that Norse mythology had no need of deriving its ideas regarding the origin of things from classical or Christian sources. Although such foreign influences are by no means to be excluded, it is probable that the material which formed the basis was in the main Teutonic in origin.

An apparently connected account of the cosmogony is furnished by *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 3 9. The connection between the various conceptions found there is, however, only an artificial one. Thus the statement that Allfather (*Alfadhir*) is the supreme deity, who is eternal, rules all, and has created heaven, earth, and sky, is at variance with what follows. The material is in part derived from *Völuspa* and *Vafthrúdhnismál*, a strophe from *Hyndluljódh* being likewise cited. *Völuspa*, 3 and 4, have the following:

> In times of old it was, where Ymir dwelt. There were nor sand nor sea nor cool waves; earth there was nowhere, nor heaven above; a yawning chasm there was, but grass nowhere.
>
> Early Bor's sons uplifted the lands, and created the fair Midhgardh. From the south the sun shone on the stones. . . . then was the ground overgrown with green herbage.

Strophe 3 contains a hysteron proteron: the void was first, and from it Ymir came forth. No further description of this

void, as a confused chaos in which all the elements were mingled, is essayed, nor is an attempt made to define it as a philosophic concept. The gods (*i.e.* Bor's sons) seem rather to reduce things to order than to create from nothing. The rôle played by Ymir is not made clear; instead of the words, "where Ymir dwelt," *Gylfaginning*, which cites this passage, has "there was naught," a change which is probably not to be set down, with Müllenhoff, as due to a desire to make the connection more logical, but to be explained, with Gering, as an effort to rescue the Christian idea of a creation from nothing. Other strophes supplement this brief account. So we read in *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 21:

From Ymir's flesh was the earth created, and from his bones the mountains; the heaven from the skull of the rime-cold giant, and from his blood the sea.

The interpolated strophes, *Grimnismál*, 40 and 41, elaborate this as follows:

From Ymir's flesh was the earth created, and from his blood the sea; the mountains from his bones; the trees from his hair, and from his skull the heaven.

And from his eyelashes the gracious gods prepared Midhgardh for the sons of men, and from his brain all the hard-hearted clouds were created.

We find the same notion, that various parts of the world were formed from members of the body of the primeval giant, in *kenningar* of the scalds. The conception may, of course, have been developed or modified at a later period, but there is nothing to prevent our ascribing to the Teutons what is found among so many different peoples: the idea that the world has arisen from the body of the primeval giant.

Ymir signifies "the sounding, the rustling one." His own origin is thus described (*Vafthrúdhnismál*, 31):

From the Elivagar dripped venom drops, which grew until a giant sprang from them.

Elivagar means "stormy waves." The word also occurs *Hymiskvidha*, 5, but there as the home of Hymir, and without having reference to the cosmogony. Now according to *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 4 and 5, there flowed from Niflheim, from the fountain Hvergelmir, the twelve rivers Elivagar, whose venomous and half-frozen waters reached Ginnungagap (the "yawning chasm" of *Völuspa*, 3). These icy strata there encountered the fiery sparks from Muspellsheim, and from this there arose, "through the might of the ruler of the universe," as *Gylfaginning* adds with a characteristic Christian coloring, the giant Ymir, who is also called Orgelmir (the mighty roarer). Ymir, as we have seen, was the ancestor of the giants, and from him the dwarfs are also descended. We here have the opposition between water and fire to which attention was directed above. The origin of Ymir is accordingly in the main a Neptunian one. There is no need of deriving these conceptions, at least not in so far as the general thought is concerned, from foreign sources.

What follows bears a decidedly more artificial character. From the sweat in his armpits Ymir brings forth the frost giants, and by touching one foot with another he begets his own progeny. Still another race was born when the cow Audhumla, who had fed Ymir with her milk, licked the salty stones. Thus arose Buri (the born one), whose son Bor (Bur) begat Odhin, Vili, and Ve by the giant's daughter Bestla. These latter slew Ymir and in his blood drowned the whole race of frost giants. Bergelmir alone saved himself in a boat and became the founder of a new race of giants.[1] From Ymir's body, which they had dragged into the middle of Ginnungagap, the gods now formed the world, in the manner just described, each of the various parts of the world originating from a member of the giant's body.

It is doubtful whether all these various features can ever

[1] *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 35.

be satisfactorily explained. We do not gain anything, for example, by interpreting the cow Audhumla as symbolical of the clouds. In this entire account the cosmogony is evidently at the same time a theogony, a cosmogonic significance having been imparted to the struggle between giants and gods. The gods are designated as Bor's sons also in *Völuspa*, 4. It is quite impossible to ascertain what elements in the story as told in *Gylfaginning* are really derived from older sources, and what is the product of Snorri's own fancy. There are no grounds for regarding the drowning of the giants in the blood of Ymir as a deluge legend.

Still another fragment, which long remained unintelligible, has reference, if not to the origin, at any rate to the organization of the world. We refer to the interpolated strophes, *Völuspa*, 5 and 6:

> The sun from the south, with the moon her fellow, cast her right hand on the edge of the heaven. The sun knew not her inn, nor the moon his dominion, nor the stars their place.
>
> Then all the powers, the most high gods, assembled to their judgment-seats and took council together, giving names to night and the new moons (phases of moons): they called morningtide and midday, afternoon and eventide by their names, for the counting of seasons.[1]

The phenomenon which is pictured here with perfect accuracy is that of the Northern midnight sun, which is seen in the heavens at the same time with the moon, — a sight that creates in the poet the feeling of a disordered state of things, as if the heavenly bodies were bewildered and had lost their way. But the gods take council together, and appoint again a regular succession of times and seasons.[2] They are here, accordingly, again the organizing powers of the universe. In their present position, which is not the original one, these

[1] CPB. I, 194.

[2] The correct interpretation of these strophes we owe to J. Hoffory (*Eddastudien*, 73–85).

strophes seem to be connected with the cosmogony, but whether this connection was original can no longer be determined. In any case this fragment is the most noteworthy, and the most truly mythical, of all the passages that deal with the heavenly bodies. The interpretation which *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 8, gives, is untenable.

Both day and night are of the race of giants; the steed of day is Skinfaxi, of night Hrimfaxi.[1] Sun (*sól*, feminine) and moon (*máni*, masculine), through whom time is measured, are the children of Mundilfœri.[2] In the interpolated strophes, *Grímnismál*, 37 and 38, steeds of the sun and a shield of the sun are mentioned. *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 10–13, elaborates these artificial genealogies still further. These chapters disturb, however, the connection of thought between what precedes and what follows, and are regarded as an interpolation. In the case of the greater part of the proper names occurring there, the appellative signification is still clearly manifest. Among the stories told are several that are ætiological in character, such as were no doubt invented by the people. Thus the children in the moon were stolen by Mani, as they were returning from a spring, and similar tales are told to explain the eclipses of the sun and moon (caused by the wolves Skǫll and Hati), and concerning the rainbow Bifrǫst, which forms a bridge between heaven and earth. Of the same general character are the observations on summer and winter (*Gylfaginning*, Chapter 19).

The accounts of the origin of man are few and meagre. We may refer in this connection to the words of Tacitus[3] (*Germania*, Chapter 2):

> They honor . . . Tuisto, a god who has sprung from the earth, and his son Mannus as the originators and founders of the race.

[1] *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 12, 14. [2] *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 23.
[3] See above, p. 79.

While Tacitus here doubtless has in mind the origin of the tribes, and not of the human race in general, this ethnogony nevertheless includes an anthropogony. Mannus signifying simply *man*. It is not likely that behind the words "sprung from the earth" we are to seek a myth of a cosmogonic marriage between heaven and earth, or of a divine phallus which was cut off and whose blood fructified the earth.[1]

Another account is found in *Völuspa*, 17 and 18 :

Until three Æsir, mighty and gracious, came out of this host to the house. They found on the land, devoid of power and destiny, Ask and Embla.

Breath they possessed not, reason they had not; neither warmth nor expression nor comely color. Odhin gave breath, Hœnir gave reason, Lodhurr gave warmth and comely color.

Gylfaginning, Chapter 9, gives the same account with only slight variations. Men sprang from trees (ash and elm?), endowed with life and spirit by the gifts of that triad of gods which we have repeatedly encountered.

While we do not in any of these accounts of the cosmogony find the idea of a creation out of nothing, there is also no trace of an eternally existing matter as a philosophic concept. Creatures and objects have either come into existence of their own accord, or have been formed by the disposing hand of the gods out of preëxisting matter.

A similar condition of affairs meets us in the case of the cosmology : the world-idea of Norse mythology has also never been united into a consistent and harmonious whole. In the cosmogony we already had occasion to mention the worlds Niflheim in the North and Muspellsheim in the South, as well as the abyss Ginnungagap. An attempt has at times been made to define geographically this "huge chasm of an abyss,"[2] by locating it now in the Polar Sea, then again in Vinland

[1] So Müllenhoff, D.A. IV, 113–114.
[2] Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, IV, 38.

(America). However this may be, the Æsir created in the centre of the universe the fair Midhgardh[1] as an habitation for men. This name Midhgardh occurs among all Teutonic peoples, and indicates either the inhabited earth as the centre of the universe, situated between heaven and the lower world, or the centre of the earth conceived as a disk, surrounded by the sea (Midhgardh-serpent). Likewise in the centre of the universe — perhaps as the smallest of a number of concentric circles[2] — lies Asgardh, which is, however, situated on high, the gods surveying the various worlds from the high-seat Hlidhskjalf. The greater part of the dwellings of the gods, which *Grímnismál*, 4–17, and *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 17, enumerate, are also situated on high, as is evident from the derivation of the names in question, but they are merely the creation of scaldic fiction. According to *Völuspa*, 7 and 60, the Æsir in the golden age dwell in Idhavǫll (the field of incessant effort), and return to it at the restoration.[3]

In our sources reference is more than once made to the nine worlds,[4] but scholars have had little success in attempts to identify these with some degree of certainty, and still less in trying to locate them. A classification into three superterrestrial, three terrestrial, and three subterrestrial has been attempted (Simrock). It has also been conjectured that according to the Norse conception the earth sloped downwards towards the north and upwards towards the south (Wilken). Others have toiled to define the geographical situation of each region more or less accurately, but all in vain: no certainty has been attained in any of these particulars. Among the nine worlds Niflheim, Muspellsheim, Midhgardh, Asgardh, and Jǫtunheim are to be regarded as certain, and to

[1] *Völuspa*, 4; *Grímnismál*, 41; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 8.
[2] So Weinhold, *Altnordisches Leben*, p. 358.
[3] Compare also *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 14, 53.
[4] *Völuspa*, 2; *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 43; *Alvíssmál*, 9; *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 3.

these we may add Vanaheim, Alfheim, — though in the *Grímnismál*, 5, this is classed among the heavenly mansions and assigned to Freyr, — and Svartalfaheim ; but even then we have only reached the number of eight. The ninth world must accordingly be obtained, either by distinguishing Hel from Niflheim, or by adding a water world which is not anywhere expressly mentioned.[1] It is obvious that it is impossible to derive from these data an accurate conception of the arrangement of the world. We should also be on our guard against attaching too much weight to a few detached observations, such as that the gods must dwell in the west, since Wodan looks out of his window towards the east, Thor on his journeys against the giants proceeds in an easterly direction, and at the abjuration of his pagan faith the convert turned his face towards the west.[2]

Eddic topography is, however, not exclusively, nor even primarily, concerned about places, but rather about the beings inhabiting them : the vǫlva, the giant Vafthrudhnir, the dwærf Alviss are so wise because they have traversed all the worlds, *i.e.* have had converse with all manner of beings. Alongside of this latter, which is after all the matter of prime importance, we find expressions of praise and admiration for the fair Midhgardh, the world of men.

The expression "nío ívidhi" used in *Völuspa*, 2, seems to designate the nine worlds as divisions of the world-tree. This world-tree bears various names. In *Völuspa*, 2, it is called *mjǫtvidhr*, *i.e.* the tree that metes out the fate of men. In keeping with this, one of his roots is located near the fountain Urdhr.[3] Usually, however, it is called Yggdrasil, but inasmuch as this word is merely a *kenning* for Odhin's steed (Sleipnir), it cannot be the name of a tree, and Askr Yggdrasils, which we find in *Grímnismál*, 29 and 30, is doubtless the more correct

[1] Compare the note of Gering on *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 43.
[2] E. H. Meyer, GM., § 250. [3] *Völuspa*, 19.

designation. It is the ash in which is Odhin's steed (the wind). The name Læradh, with which, as is evident from the connection, the same world-tree is designated in *Grímnismál*, 25 and 26, still awaits an explanation. A fourth name is Mimameidhr (the tree of Mimir),[1] which indicates its close relationship to Mimir, one of its roots being located at Mimir's fountain.

Völuspa, without anywhere giving a detailed description, tells us incidentally[2] that this gigantic tree, besprinkled with dew, stands ever green at the fountain of Urdhr, that the horn of Heimdallr lies hidden under it, and that it will tremble at the final catastrophe. *Fjǫlsvinnsmál*, 13–18 (with a lacuna between strophes 15 and 16), which are only loosely connected with the remainder of the poem, and which break the continuity of thought, relate how the tree Mimameidhr springs from unknown roots, how destruction is impending over it, and how the cock Vidhofnir (identical with the one which in *Völuspa*, 43, summons to the final conflict?) is seated in its boughs and causes the hostile forces, Sinmara (?) and Surtr, great anxiety. *Grímnismál*[3] stands alone in the Eddic songs in giving a detailed picture of Yggdrasil's ash. We are there told that the goat Heidhrun bites from the boughs of Læradh, and fills the bowls with its milk, of which, according to *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 39, the *Einherjar* drink. The hart Eikthyrnir also bites from its leaves, and from his horns water drips into the fountain Hvergelmir, in Niflheim, whence all rivers flow.

On their steeds the Æsir daily ride forth to sit in judgment at Yggdrasil's ash.

Three roots stretch out in three directions under Yggdrasil's ash. Hel dwells under one, the frost giants under the other, the race of men under the third.

A wise eagle is seated in the top of the tree; at its roots gnaws the serpent Nidhhǫggr. The squirrel Ratatoskr runs

[1] *Fjǫlsvinnsmál*, 14. [2] Strophes 19, 27, 47. [3] Strophes 25, 26, 29–35.

up and down the tree, and carries words of strife from the eagle down to the serpent. Besides, four harts gnaw at the branches and countless serpents lie at the roots, so that the tree has greater hardships to bear than men are aware of. With some modifications the same description is repeated in *Gylfaginning*, Chapters 15, 16, and 39, where the utter lack of harmony between the various elements of the conception shows itself even more clearly. As Müllenhoff[1] has remarked, a perusal of these passages can leave in the mind only the most incongruous ideas concerning the character of the world-tree.

It would be a thankless task to attempt to analyze the Norse conception of the world-tree in all its details and to trace the origin of the separate features. While it admits of no doubt that some of the latter represent genuine myths, elsewhere it is equally certain that the introduction of mere scaldic paraphrases, poetic and symbolic conceptions, has considerably modified the original picture. It is quite unlikely that we are to attribute any share in this transformation to classical and Christian influences; in any case this could apply to minor points only. The picture that is unfolded before our eyes is that of the world-tree, under which the gods hold *thing*, which is sustained by Mimir and by Odhin's pawn (his eye), *i.e.* by water and sun, in which the wind rustles, which is continually menaced, and which trembles at the end of things.

This end of things had long before been announced and prepared, by the appearance of the three Norns on Idhavǫll,[2] by the war with the Vanir, and by the Æsir's violation of their oaths.[3] In *Vǫluspa* these myths constitute part of the world-drama: in the mouth of the vǫlva they have assumed the significance that through the guilt of the Æsir the golden age was terminated, peace broken, and the end prepared. Everything

[1] DA. V, 103. [2] *Vǫluspa*, 8.

[3] *Vǫluspa*, 21–26. No express mention is made in *Vǫluspa* of the construction of a burgh for the Æsir by a giant builder.

else is brought into connection with this end: the hiding of the horn of Heimdallr under the tree,[1] and Baldr's death, which is the greatest calamity that could befall Walhalla, for although Loki is in chains, his power is by no means broken forever.[2] The words that Odhin whispers into the ear of Baldr before he is placed upon the pyre (*Vafthrúdhnismál*, 54, 55) also refer to the final catastrophe. The connection existing between these myths in *Völuspa* is, of course, the work of the poet.

The scene of the final struggle is preceded in *Völuspa*, 36–38, by a sketch of the worlds that are hostile to the Æsir:

From the east there flows through venomous dales a stream with knives and swords. It is called Slidhr (the fearful).[3]

. . . . . .

There stood in the north on Nidhavǫllir (Dismalplains) a hall of gold of the race of Sindri. Another stood on Okolnir (Uncold), the beer-hall of the giant, who is called Brimir.

A hall I saw stand far from the sun, on Nastrand. Its doors are turned northward. Drops of venom fell in through its luffer: the hall is entwined with the backs of serpents.

All these worlds are the habitations of giants and other enemies of the Æsir. Then follows a description of the end to come, in part based on popular belief, and in part the creation of the poet's fancy. Foreign sources do not constitute a factor in the production. In a forest a giantess gives birth to the progeny of Fenrir, more especially to that sun-devouring wolf, who feeds on the flesh of the slain.[4] On the hill of the giantess sits the watchman Eggther and strikes the harp, and in each of the three worlds, with the giants, with the Æsir and with Hel, a cock crows.[5]

The dog Garm also begins to bay loud before Gnipahellir, and the chains that hold the Fenris-wolf are rent asunder, and the wolf courses about.[6]

[1] *Völuspa*, 27.
[2] *Völuspa*, 32–35.
[3] Here follows a lacuna of two lines.
[4] *Völuspa*, 40, 41.
[5] *Völuspa*, 42, 43.
[6] *Völuspa*, 44.

It is a period of great degeneracy in the world of men:

Brothers shall fight and slay one another, sisters' sons shall break the bonds of kinship. It shall fare hard with the world: great whoredom, an axe-age, a sword-age, shields shall be cloven, a wind-age, a wolf-age, ere the world sinks in ruin. No man shall spare the other.[1]

There is no need of assuming that in the depicting of this scene Christian influences have been at work. The touch, at any rate, that the ties of blood will be dissolved, is thoroughly in keeping with Teutonic ideas. In another passage[2] floods and snowstorms announce the approaching end. Of this commotion *Völuspa*, 46–53, furnishes a description:

Mimir's sons [*i.e.* the waters] are in motion, and the end is drawing nigh at the sound of the old *gjallarhorn*. Loud blows Heimdallr, the horn is raised aloft, Odhin talks with the head of Mimir.

Yggdrasil's ash towering trembles, the old tree groans, and the giant [Loki] breaks loose.

The Æsir are thereupon attacked from three sides: from the east come the giants with the Midhgardh-serpent; from the north the ship manned by the people from Hel and steered by Loki, and also the Fenris-wolf; from the south Surtr and his followers from Muspellsheim. Odhin engages in combat with the Fenris-wolf, Freyr with Surtr, Thor with the Midhgardh-serpent, and all the three gods fall in the struggle. Thereupon,

The sun begins to darken, the earth sinks into the sea, the bright stars vanish from heaven. Vapor and fire rage, the high flame licks the sky.[3]

Among the features that the Snorra Edda (*Gylfaginning*, Chapter 51) adds to this scene is, first of all, the Fimbul-winter — three winters without intervening summer — that precedes the end. Then there is also the ship Naglfar (nail-ship), built from the nails of the dead, in which Hrymr makes his way

[1] *Völuspa*, 45.
[2] *Völuspa hin skamma* in *Hyndluljódh*, 44.
[3] *Völuspa*, 57.

from the land of the giants. To the three pairs of combatants a fourth has been added: Tyr and the dog Garm, who kill each other. Finally, *Gylfaginning* also carries out the motif of the vengeance taken by Vidharr (the son of Odhin) upon the Fenris-wolf. Strophe 54 of *Völuspa*, which also refers to this latter incident, seems to be spurious.

But this is after all not the end of things: a new earth and a rejuvenated race of gods arise from the waters:[1]

A second time I see the earth come forth from the sea again, in fresh verdure. Cascades fall, the eagle soars on high, which in the mountains preys on fish.

The gods meet on Idhavǫll, talk of the mighty earth-encircler, and there call to mind the great events, and the ancient runes of Fimbultyr.

There shall again be found in the grass the wonderful golden tables which in days of old they had possessed. . . .

Unsown the fields shall yield, all evil shall be amended, Baldr shall come. Hǫdhr and Baldr inhabit Hroptr's fields of combat, the abode of the gods of battle. Know ye yet or what?

Then can Hœnir choose his lot-twig . . . and the sons of the brothers of Tveggi inhabit the spacious Vindheim. Know ye yet or what?

A hall I see, fairer than the sun, thatched with gold, on Gimle: there shall the hosts of the righteous dwell, and forever abide in bliss.

The powerful one comes to hold high judgment, the mighty one from above, who rules over all. . . .

The dark dragon comes flying, the glistening serpent from below, from Nidhafjǫllir: in his plumage bears — he flies o'er the plain — Nidhhǫggr the corpses; now he will sink away.

This picture is supplemented by *Vafthrúdhnismál*, 44–53, where the giant Vafthrudhnir makes answer to the questions that Odhin, in disguise, propounds concerning the end of things. Two human beings, Lif and Lifthrasir (*i.e.* "life" and "desiring life"), survive the catastrophe, by hiding in the world-ash. The sun (Alfrǫdhull, *elf-ray*) before being devoured by Fenrir has given birth to a daughter, and three groups of Norns protect the new race of men. Of the Æsir, Vidharr

[1] *Völuspa*, 59–66.

and Vali, Modhi and Magni alone remain. In *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 53, these various episodes have simply been combined to form a connected narrative.

While the presence of Christian influences in this eschatology cannot be gainsaid, it is yet not a mere copy of the apocalypses. The expectation that the world would be destroyed,[1] and even that a restoration would follow, is not necessarily an idea that was foreign to the Teutons. Its present elaborated form, however, belongs to the period of ferment which produced *Völuspa*,[2] viz. the tenth century, when Christianity was exerting both a direct and an indirect influence, thus giving rise to these and similar conceptions of a mixed character. The poet was himself probably not entirely conscious of a distinction between the pagan and the Christian elements entering into his conceptions, but involuntarily borrowed various Christian notions. As belonging to the latter class, we may mention the conception of the mighty one, who comes from above to pronounce judgment (*Völuspa*, 65),[3] and more especially the entire framework of the poem as a world-drama. It is obvious that this view is by no means tantamount to regarding *Völuspa* as a deliberate and artificial imitation of Christian dogmas.

It still remains to consider what *Völuspa* has to say concerning life after death. Hel and Walhalla have before been discussed. To these *Völuspa*, 38 and 39, adds a notion which was doubtless originally foreign to Teutonic paganism, viz. that of a retribution. In Nastrand stands the hall where no sunlight penetrates, where venom drips through the roof, where the savage river (probably again the Slidhr) drags along perjurers and murderers, where Nidhhǫggr sucks the corpses of the dead, and the wolf rends men. *Völuspa*, 64, on the other hand, pictures the life of bliss of the hosts of the righteous, on Gimle,

[1] See *Muspilli*, p. 130. [2] See above, p. 202.
[3] Müllenhoff, DA. V, 34, would vindicate Teutonic origin for even this feature.

after the restoration. *Gylfaginning*[1] has once more juxtaposed these two sides.

In conclusion, a passage from Saxo (I, 51) containing an account of a journey to hell may find a place here. King Hadding is visited at mealtime by a woman bearing, in the middle of the winter, a fresh green plant. She conducts him to the subterranean world to show him where this plant grows. Along paths that are worn smooth, and through mists, they pass by richly attired, distinguished men, and reach the sunny fields where the plant grows. They also see a swift stream (the Slidhr?), with a bridge leading across, and fallen warriors that still continue the combat (*Einherjar*). They finally arrive at a wall over which the woman throws the head of a cock, that is at once restored to life. With this the story ends. Of retribution in the hereafter there is not a single trace.[2]

[1] Chapter 52.

[2] In Müller and Velschow, Saxo, II, *Notæ Uberiores*, pp. 64–65, the various parts of this narrative are submitted to a critical examination.

CHAPTER XIX

WORSHIP AND RITES

I. Temples and Idols

Various names were in use among the ancient Teutons for a sanctuary. In the Gothic translation of the Bible, "temple" is rendered by *alhs*, a building being always referred to in the particular connection. The Old High German *wîh* (Norse *vé*) and *haruc* are rather indefinite in their meaning, being applied without distinction to *fanum*, *delubrum*, *lucus*, and *nemus* alike. Both occur in a number of names of places. Tacitus[1] repeatedly mentions sacred forests in which the tribes assembled and worshipped their gods[2]; the "temple" of Nerthus is perhaps also identical with the sacred grove (*castum nemus*) of a few lines previous. The sanctuary of Tamfana of the Marsi, that Germanicus razed,[3] was probably a building, although it is not inconceivable that even this was a sacred grove with its enclosure, which were levelled to the ground.

In these sacred forests the ceremonies connected with the cult took place, and the sacrifices were offered. They were also regarded as the abode of the gods, and were approached only with a feeling of awe and terror, as may be gathered from the remarks of Tacitus on the sacred forest of the Semnones.[4] In these forests were kept the figures and emblems[5] — at times representing animals — that accompanied the armies into battle.[6] Here also the prisoners of war were sacrificed

1 *Germania*, Chapters 9, 39, 40, 43.
2 See above, pp. 101–102.
3 *Annals*, I, 51.
4 *Germania*, Chapter 39.
5 "Effigies signaque."
6 *Germania*, Chapter 7; *Historiæ*, IV, 22.

on altars, and their heads hung on the trees, as we know was done with the soldiers of Varus.[1]

Survivals of this reverence and of these usages are met with even in the Middle Ages. The church inveighed against them and sought to destroy the sacred forests and hew down the sacred trees. Thus we are told by Adam of Bremen (II, 46) that archbishop Unwan built churches with wood from forests that had formerly been held sacred. In the fifth century there existed in the city of Auxerre — the possibility of this being Keltic must therefore be reckoned with — a pear tree, on whose spreading branches, according to a poem of the ninth century, quoted by Grimm,[2] hung heads of wild beasts.

When Grimm remarks in the same connection,[3] "The transition from the notion of a forest temple to that of a single tree to which divine honors are paid is an easy one," he places the two rather too closely together: the forest as temple, and tree worship, are two distinct and separate things. In Tacitus, as a matter of fact, only the former is to be found, but in popular belief numerous observances point to the conception of trees as possessing a soul and as constituting objects of worship.[4]

Even in the days when the cult itself was carried on in the temple the forests did not lose their significance. The beech groves in Seeland were none the less sacred because a temple had been erected at Lethra. Near Alkmaar (formerly Alcmere, *i.e.* the temple near the sea, in the Netherlands) lies Heilo (the sacred forest). At the sanctuary at Upsala the sacrificial animals were hung up in the forest. Not merely the building of a temple but all the environs were sacred, as in the case of Fosite's land (Helgoland), with its temples, springs, and pastures.[5] From the centuries immediately succeeding the

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, I, 61. [2] DM.[4], p. 63. [3] DM.[4], p. 61.
[4] We have in mind here the material collected by Mannhardt in *Der Baumkultus der Germanen*. [5] See above, p. 122.

time of Tacitus the names of very few temples have come down to us. From the sixth century on we possess considerable evidence concerning the existence of sanctuaries and temples among the Burgundians, Franks, Lombards, Alemanni, etc., but as a rule these references consist of a bare mention. We are acquainted with Frisian sanctuaries through the biographies of the missionaries; such existed on the island of Walcheren, near the Bordena,[1] near Dokkum, and on the island of Fosite. Among the Anglo-Saxons the temples must have been both numerous and large. Bede repeatedly mentions both sanctuaries and images, among others the sanctuary "with all its enclosures" which the chief priest Coïfi himself destroyed.[2] In the remarkable letter in which pope Gregory discusses the missionary methods to be followed, he advises that the people be won over "by steps and degrees and not by bounds," and that the heathen sanctuaries are accordingly not to be razed, but to be arranged for Christian use, "in order that when the people see that their own sanctuaries are not being destroyed they may banish their error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more freely assemble at the accustomed places."

Important temples are actually known to us only in the case of the Scandinavian peoples. Especially prominent among these were the temple at Lethra in Seeland and the temple at Upsala, which, while not as yet mentioned in the life of Rimbert, is described with considerable detail by Adam of Bremen (IV, 26). It was wholly equipped with gold, and was situated not far from that ancient sanctuary at Sigtun (Sictona) where, according to the Ynglinga Saga, Chapter 5, Odhin had taken up his abode and had instituted the bloody sacrifices. On the island of Gotland stood another large temple, with hundreds of images and large treasures, which Hakon Jarl seized.[3]

[1] For the Bordena see von Richthofen, *Friesische Rechtsgeschichte*, II, 100.
[2] See above, pp. 151–152.
[3] *Jomsvikingasaga*, Chapter 12.

In Norway there likewise existed a large number of temples: we know of about one hundred by name. They are frequently mentioned in the sagas, especially those at Throndhjem, Gudhbrandsdalir, and Hladir. For the most part these were consecrated to the worship of Thor or of Freyr, of whom they contained images of all dimensions. Such a *hof* (the Norse name for "temple") was usually constructed of wood, only rarely of stone. In Iceland it was at times built of peat, or wood brought along from Norway, as in the case of the temple of Thorolf, a description of which, to be found in the Eyrbyggja Saga, we cited under the head of "Thor."

In view of our meagre knowledge of ancient Teutonic temples, the construction and arrangement of these Norwegian and Icelandic temples possesses the greater interest for us. Such a temple consisted of two separate but adjoining buildings, together forming an oblong, which on one of its sides was semicircular. The following figure will serve to make this clear. The open spaces represent doors. The dimensions of

these temples varied, but one part was always larger than the other. This larger division was designed for use at the sacrificial feast, and was arranged like a common hall,[1] with the hearth-fire in the centre and the seats arranged on the two sides. Prominent among the latter was the high-seat for the priest (*qndvegi*), with its pillars (*qndvegissúlur*), which were adorned with a row of nails, and also at times with carved images of the gods. The smaller building was called the *afhús* (off-house), and contained the images of the gods and

[1] For a representation of such a hall see Dasent, *The Story of Burnt Njal*, I, c.

the *stallr*, a sort of altar, on which lay the ring that the godhi put around his arm at the sacrifice. On the *stallr* burnt also the sacred fire, and there likewise stood the sacrificial bowl (*hlautbolli*), with its sacrificial whisk (*hlautteinn*), with which the priest sprinkled the images and at times also the walls. Around the temple was an enclosure (*gardhr*, *skidhgardhr*) of about a man's height. That the plan of such an Icelandic temple is an imitation of the architecture of a Christian church, with its nave, choir, and apse, as Golther[1] would have us believe, is not at all probable for the centuries (ninth and tenth) of the Icelandic emigration.

We know from Tacitus that the forests, among the Semnones and the Nerthus tribes, were regarded as peculiarly sacred, and were dreaded. Among the Frisians severe penalties were attached to profanation of temples. "Whoever has broken into a temple and has taken any of the sacred things, is conducted to the sea, and in the sand which the tide of the sea is accustomed to cover, his ears are slit, he is castrated and offered up to the gods whose temples he has violated."[2] In the North the carrying of arms within the temple enclosure was forbidden, and he who violated the sacred peace of the temple was put under the ban as an outlaw, as a *vargr í véum*, a wolf in the temple.

The holy places were of old closely connected with the political life, as we know from Tacitus and from the conditions among the Frisians and Saxons of a later period. This applies to the Scandinavian countries as well. The four large Danish temples, at Viborg (Vebjorg), at Odhinsvé (on the island of Funen), at Lethra, and at Lund (from *lundr*, sacred grove) in Scania, formerly belonging to Denmark, are also political centres. The same is true of Upsala, in Sweden, and of the Norwegian temples, to be found in each separate *fylki* (shire).

[1] GM., p. 602.
[2] *Vita Gregorii episcopi Ultrajecti.*

Scholars have at times gone too far in assuming a complete religious organization in these countries, such as really existed in Iceland alone. This island was divided into four parts, one of which had four *things*, while the others had three each. Each of these thirteen *things* had three temples (*godhordh*), each with its own *hofgodhi*, who also levied the temple tribute. These thirty-nine temples coincided with the religious organization of Iceland, each godhi being at the same time priest and political head. Private persons also possessed the right of erecting a temple of their own, but without performing in that case the public functions or enjoying the public rights and privileges of the godhi. These political conditions survived paganism and continued until the very end of the Icelandic republic.

Tacitus states that the Teutons had no idols ("nulla simulacra"), and he attributes this to the lofty ideas they entertained of their gods ("ex magnitudine cælestium"),[1] a philosophic observation in which we need scarcely follow him. Just what was the outward form of the symbols to which he refers by such phrases as "effigies signaque," "signa et formas," "ferarum imagines," we have no means of ascertaining. Nor do we know whether the *numen ipsum* of Nerthus, which rode about on a wagon and was cleansed in the lake, was an image or a symbol. The Irminsul was, however, not an image.[2] Nor are images mentioned in connection with Fosite's island. The *vitæ* of Willehad, Willebrord, and Liudger repeatedly refer to images, among which the great idol on Walcheren, which Willebrord himself destroyed, is to be especially noted.[3] The earliest testimony concerning an image of a Teutonic divinity is that of Sozomen,[4] who states that the Gothic king Athanaric had an image (ξόανον) drawn about on a wagon, commanding the people to worship it and to offer up

[1] *Germania*, Chapter 9.
[2] See above, pp. 124–125.
[3] *Vita Willebrordi*, Chapter 14.
[4] *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VI, 37.

sacrifices to it. When we are told that the Christian Burgundian consort of Chlodowech says to him, "Your gods are only gods of stone, wood, and metal," this is perhaps nothing more than a conventional phrase of Gregory of Tours, which proves nothing at all in regard to Frankish idols.

In the Scandinavian North there were numerous images either in the temples proper[1] or on the *stallr*, where several stood side by side. Now and then we hear of a large number in one temple. Images were also found on high-seats and on prows of ships. Miniature images were frequently carried about on one's person. Images were usually made of wood[2] — at times also of gold and silver, — were richly adorned and often accompanied by their attributes, — Thor by his hammer, Freyr "ingenti priapo." A number of images were famous, such as the colossal statue of Thor erected on the island of Samsö by the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok; the stone statue of Thor, splendidly adorned with gold and silver, in the temple at Gudhbrandsdalir, of which the peasants expected, even in the age of the holy Olaf, that it would annihilate its adversaries; and, likewise at Gudhbrandsdalir, the image of Thor, together with those of Thorgerdh Hǫlgabrudh and Irpa, on a wagon, all three adorned with golden rings.[3]

Of greater importance than a further multiplying of examples is the question, What ideas were associated with these idols in the minds of the people? Von Richthofen denies that the Frisians thought of their images as animated. In the case of the Scandinavians, however, it is evident from a number of stories that the gods were conceived of as operative in the images. Thus in the example cited above, in which the statue of Thor was expected to make a stand against the enemy. In the tale of Thrond of Gate, embodied in the Fœreyinga Saga, we are told how there stood an image of Thorgerdh in a

[1] At Upsala and in Gotland.

[2] Hence called *trégodh, skurdhgodh* (carven image).

[3] *Njalssaga*, Chapter 87.

temple, just opposite the entrance, and how, from the attitude that the image assumed, the petitioners were able to infer the answer of the goddess. "We shall have it as a mark of what she thinks of this, if she will do as I wish and let the ring loose which she holds in her hand." But she held fast to the ring, and not until he had repeated his prayer was the jarl able to wrest the ring away.[1] The story also of Gunnar and the young priestess of Freyr, to which we have before referred, is based wholly on the belief "that Freyr was a living person . . . and the people supposed that the woman lived with him as his wife,"[2] Freyr being throughout this story identified with his image. Chapter 150 of the same saga affords another example. King Olaf makes every effort to persuade a certain Raudhr to adopt Christianity, but the latter puts his trust in Thor, inasmuch as the god by blowing in his beard caused a tempest to rise against the king. All this, however, was to no purpose, for, as Thor himself had predicted, the king reaches the island of Raudhr notwithstanding. Finally a decisive test was proposed and agreed upon: Thor and the king were to stand on opposite sides of a fire, and, in order to show which was the stronger, each was to attempt to draw the other into the fire. Thor proved to be the weaker of the two, and was burnt to ashes. This image accordingly was made of wood.

It is hardly possible to regard this conception, that the god is actively present in his image or symbol, as a more recent development. The ancient tribes would certainly not have brought forth their symbols from the forest, to accompany them into battle, if they had not been of the opinion that with these the gods themselves took part in the conflict. While images among the Teutons, as also elsewhere, seem to be of later date than symbols, we may yet assume that the idea of vitality present in the image was there from the very beginning.

[1] Tale of Thrond of Gate, Chapter 23 in the Fœreyinga Saga, Northern Library.
[2] The greater *Olaf Tryggvasonssaga*, Chapter 173.

II. Priests

The earliest testimony regarding Teutonic priests, or rather regarding the absence of priests, is to be found in the well-known words of Cæsar:[1] "They neither have druids, who superintend divine worship, nor do they make frequent use of sacrifices." The evident contradiction between these words and the data of Tacitus has never been satisfactorily explained. It has, indeed, been contended that Cæsar is merely intent upon drawing a contrast between the Teutons and the Gauls, the latter being accustomed to frequent sacrifices and having an organized priesthood; but such considerations do not alter the fact that he expressly denies the existence among the Teutons of priests "who superintend divine worship," whereas from Tacitus we are absolutely certain that such priests existed. To maintain that in the century and a half which separates Cæsar and Tacitus a development took place which would account for this difference, is a gratuitous assumption. As a solution of the problem, Seeck[2] suggests that the Gallic druids, when driven from Gaul by Roman persecution, crossed the Rhine and became the nucleus of the Teutonic priesthood. Wresting divination from the hands of the old women,[3] they founded a power that was ever increasing, and which might have led to a theocracy, if its course had not been interrupted by foreign dominion and by the spread of Christianity. Ingenious as this hypothesis is, it does not harmonize with the data at hand: there is not a single trace to indicate that the Teutonic priests were of foreign origin, a fact which would also certainly not have escaped the eye of Tacitus. It is equally inconceivable that the Gallic druids reached, for example, the Frisians, among whom priests also play an important rôle.

[1] *B. G.*, VI, 21.
[2] O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der alten Welt*, I, 210.
[3] Compare the priestesses among the Cimbri, Strabo, *Geographica*, p. 294.

As is usual, the evidence of Tacitus on this point is weighty but fragmentary. We learn to know the priests more especially in their political capacity. While they also perform the sacred functions of the state, bring sacrifices, and consult omens, they are equally important from the political point of view: they administer justice (the priest being in fact called *êwart*, "guardian of the law") and preserve peace in the army and popular assembly. When Tacitus (*Germania*, Chapter 7) discusses the limited power of the kings and leaders, he adds: "But only the priests have power to put to death, to put in chains, or even to inflict stripes; not by way of punishment, nor at the command of the leader, but as if ordered by the god, whom they believe present with those engaged in war." By way of an anticlimax the power of deciding over life and death (*animadvertere*), of casting in chains, and of inflicting the ignominious punishment of scourging are here denied the leaders and assigned to the priests alone, who acted in the name of the god, the latter being present in the army as well as in the popular assembly. There is no good reason for invariably identifying this god with Tiu: the divinity was doubtless a different one among different tribes.

In *Germania*, Chapter 10, the priest is regarded as the *sacerdos civitatis* (priest of the state), who consults the omens for the state, as does the *pater familias* in the personal and domestic affairs of life. Together with the king or chief, the priest accompanies the wagon drawn by the sacred horses and gives careful attention to the neighing of these horses, priests and chiefs alike regarding themselves as servants of the deity. Chapter 11 of the *Germania* tells us of the functions performed by the priests in the popular assembly: "Silence is commanded by the priest, who also has the right to enforce it." They were not what we are accustomed to call leaders or presidents of an assembly, but they invested judicial procedure with a certain sanctity, and guarded justice

and peace in both the *thing* and army, meting out punishment upon the violators. With the office of law-speaker, such as existed in the Icelandic republic, Tacitus was not acquainted. It is, however, quite generally assumed that the office of the Frisian *âsega* also bore a priestly character.[1]

It is certainly imputing a meaning to the words of Tacitus that they do not of themselves possess, when, to the exclusion of the chieftains, we invest the priests, apart from their priestly functions, with the entire criminal jurisdiction.[2] If such had been the case, the public life of the Teutons would practically have borne a theocratic character, which is scarcely conceivable in the absence of a fixed organization of the priesthood. The priests belonged most likely to noble families and were accordingly of the same rank and station as the chiefs. The office may even have been a hereditary one. Their political functions, consisting of the maintenance of peace in *thing* and army, were important and doubtless gave them considerable influence and power. Only few priests are mentioned by name; by chance the name of a certain Libus, a priest of the Chatti, who took part in the triumphal procession of Germanicus, has come down to us. Sinistus, a name that occurs for the chief priest of the Burgundians, seems to have been a title, signifying "the oldest." Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVIII, 5, 14) tells us that he was irremovable,[3] whereas the king could be deposed in case of failure of crops or of defeat. We do not anywhere else meet such a chief priest, but only priests of particular sanctuaries. Tacitus usually speaks of priests (*sacerdotes*) in the plural.

[1] So Müllenhoff, DA. IV, 239; von Richthofen, *Friesische Rechtsgeschichte*, II, 456 ff. Von Amira (GGA. 1883, p. 1066), on the contrary, denies this and, in general, greatly restricts the juridical functions of the priest.

[2] This is done, in an otherwise important study, by E. Ritterling, *Das Priesterthum bei den Germanen* (*Historisches Taschenbuch*, 6. Folge, Jahrgang, 1888), pp. 177–232.

[3] "Perpetuus, obnoxius discriminibus nullis, ut reges."

In the discussion of the individual tribes, in the second part of the *Germania*, priests are occasionally mentioned. The goddess Nerthus has a male priest, whereas the god Freyr, at Upsala, had an attendant priestess. At the cult of the Dioscuri, among the Nahanarvali,[1] there presided a priest bedecked like a woman (*muliebri ornatu*). This latter probably refers to the hairdress.[2] Among the Lugii and the Vandals the royal family was called Hazdiggôs, *i.e.* men with the hairdress of a woman, like the Merovingi among the Franks. The priesthood therefore shared this characteristic with the nobility. Neither the Norse *vǫlur*, nor such godlike women as Veleda and Albruna, of whom we hear occasionally, are to be classed among the priests.

In the case of a number of Teutonic peoples our information concerning their priests is very meagre. Among the Goths the priests, like the kings, belonged to the nobility (*pileati*, "wearing a cap"), as over against the people (*capillati*, "with flowing hair"). Among the Anglo-Saxons it was not "lawful for a priest either to bear arms or to ride on horseback, except on a mare."[3]

Least of all are there traces of a priestly caste among the Scandinavians. In Norway it is the king or jarl who at the *thing* conducts the sacrifice, presides at the festive meal, and makes the libation. While temples possessed officiating priests (*blótmadhr*, *spámadhr*), it nowhere appears that these possessed exclusive powers or prerogatives. It is difficult to estimate just what rôle they played in public and private life. In Iceland the godhi[4] was the proprietor of the temple and the leader at the *thing*. They were not exclusively nor even primarily priests: they combined priestly and political functions, and retained the latter even after the conversion to

[1] *Germania*, Chapter 43.
[2] Müllenhoff, ZfdA. X, 556; XII, 346.
[3] Bede, HE. II, 13.
[4] See G. W. Dasent, *The Story of Burnt Njal*, I, Introduction, pp. xlvi–li; K. Maurer, *Zur Godenwürde*, ZfdPh, IV, 127; *Island*, p. 211.

Christianity. The organization of Iceland, with its office of law-speaker, had in any case little of a priestly, theocratic character.

III. Prayer and Sacrifice

Jacob Grimm[1] was of the opinion that prayer owed its origin to sacrifice. He distinguishes three stages: sacrifice without prayer, sacrifice with prayer, and prayer without sacrifice. This view, however, is erroneous. From the very outset the gift bestowed was accompanied by the words with which it was to be dedicated to the gods, and through which its purpose was indicated, just as divination was accompanied by the invocation of the gods. Tacitus tells us that when a priest or the father of a household sought to divine the future by drawing lots "he invoked the gods and lifted up his eyes to heaven."[2] When the magic runes are employed for obtaining victory Tyr is invoked, while for the safe delivery of a woman in labor the *dísir* are called upon.[3]

As regards ritualistic practices, the baring of the head and bending of the body seem of old to have been in vogue. The Gothic priests formed, however, an exception to this customary baring of the head: "They made sacrifices with caps (*tiarae*) on their heads," and were accordingly called *pileati*.[4] Whether the bending of the body was meant to signify, as Grimm[5] thinks, "that the human suppliant presented and submitted himself as a defenceless victim to the mighty god, his vanquisher," we do not venture to decide, but the notion seems rather lofty. In the Norse sagas men kneel or even cast themselves down upon the ground before the divine images. While praying, the suppliant looked towards the north.

[1] *Kl. Schr.*, II, 260.
[2] *Germania*, Chapter 10.
[3] *Sigrdrífumál*, 6, 9.
[4] Jordanes, DOAG., Chapters 5, 11.
[5] DM.[4], p. 25.

Christianity introduced the custom of looking towards the east, and by way of contrast, at the abjuration of the heathen gods, the convert was made to face the west. A trace of a ritual, upon the observance of which the success of sacrifice and prayer depended, is thought to be contained in some lines of *Hávamál*, 143 and 144:

> Knowest thou how one is to pray? Knowest thou how one is to sacrifice? . . .
>
> It is better not to pray than to make sacrifices to excess.

Oaths were likewise sworn with invocation of the gods. Von Amira[1] maintains that this adjuring of the gods is unessential, and that the oath consists of the pledging of certain objects. Thus one swears by one's beard, sword, and various other things, that are thereupon touched with the hand.[2] But it is obvious that, when a person taking an oath touched the staff of the judge, or the ring of Ullr dipped in sacrificial blood, these were not objects that were being pledged. There can be no doubt whatever that oaths were sworn by water and rocks, and by numerous gods that are known to us by name.

For sacrifice the usual word, especially common in Old Norse, is *blót*. We also find in Old High German *kelt*, Old Saxon *geld*. The oldest Teutonic sacrifice of which we possess a record is that of the Cimbri, related by Strabo.[3] Among the women that accompanied the army were soothsaying priestesses, with gray hair, robed in white, with an upper garment of fine linen fastened on the shoulder, wearing a girdle and going barefoot.[4] With drawn swords they advanced towards the prisoners, crowned them with wreaths, and conducted them to a bronze sacrificial vessel which held about twenty amphoræ.

[1] PG.[2], III, 214. [2] Grimm, DRA. 894 ff. [3] *Geographica*, p. 294.

[4] On ritualistic nakedness, see the important essay of K. Weinhold, *Zur Geschichte des heidnischen Ritus*, ABA. 1896, pp. 1–50.

One of the priestesses ascended a ladder and bending over the caldron cut the throats of the prisoners. Some prophesied from the blood that flowed into the basin, others from the entrails of the victims. The three characteristic features of this account to which attention may be called are: (1) that prisoners of war are slaughtered; (2) that the sacrifice is exclusively for purposes of divination; (3) that no god is named to whom the sacrifice is made.

The sacrifices mentioned by Tacitus have already been touched upon. They comprise: that of the Roman prisoners whose skulls were fastened to trees;[1] the great sacrifice with which the war between the Chatti and Hermunduri was to end;[2] the sacrifice in the forest of the Semnones, in which a man was slain in behalf of the state, but where it is not clear whether the victim was a prisoner of war, a criminal, or simply a member of the tribe;[3] the drowning of the slaves of Nerthus.[4] In *Germania*, Chapter 9, we are told that on stated days human sacrifices were brought to Mercury, which must, of course, not be taken as implying that no other gods received human offerings. "Hercules and Mars," Tacitus continues, "they appease with allowable animals," which we must not interpret as meaning that the offerings consisted of the special animals sacred to each of the two gods, but that the sacrifices were admissible from a Roman point of view, *i.e.* not horrible human sacrifices. The term for appropriate sacrificial animals was *Ziefer*, *Geziefer* (German). Only the *exuviæ*, the hide and head, were given to the gods, the rest being eaten at the sacrificial feast.

A large number of sacrifices are mentioned by the historians of the period of the migrations, in the *vitæ* of the missionaries, and in the laws enacted against paganism. At his invasion of Italy Radagais vowed that he would bring the blood of the

[1] *Annals*, I, 61.
[2] *Annals*, XIII, 57.
[3] *Germania*, Chapter 39.
[4] *Germania*, Chapter 40.

Christians as a libation to his gods. The Goths sacrificed their prisoners to Mars. The Franks threw the captive women and children into the Po before crossing the river.[1] Among the Frisians prisoners of war and those who had violated a temple were sacrificed. Among the Saxons Charles the Great had to forbid human sacrifices. We must not suppose that criminals and prisoners of war alone were sacrificed. Of the Franks, Heruli, and Saxons we are told that "they were confident that the wrath of the gods was appeased by the shedding of innocent blood; that they might be restored to the good favor of their gods, they had been accustomed to sacrifice their kinsmen."[2] Similarly, the *Vita Wulframi*, Chapter 2, relates how the two sons of a widow had been designated by lot "for sacrifice to the gods and for death in the waves of the sea."

There is no reason for supposing that the ancient Teutons possessed a fixed sacrificial ritual any more than they possessed an organized priesthood. While offerings were made at stated times (*certis diebus*), and in the sacred places which formed the centres of the amphictyonies (Semnones, Nerthus nations, Marsi, Frisians), there also were sacrifices on special occasions, as when a victory had been won or a river was to be crossed. Three kinds of sacrifices may be distinguished: those subserving purposes of divination; human sacrifices to appease the wrath of the gods; sacrifices of animals followed by the sacrificatory feast. We frequently read of song and dance accompanying the sacrifice, as among the Lombards at the sacrifice of a goat: "At this same time, when the Lombards had obtained nearly four hundred prisoners of war, they offered up to the devil, in accordance with their custom, the head of a she-goat, consecrating it to him by running

[1] Procopius, BG. II, 25.

[2] Ennodius, *Vita Antonii*, p. 382, quoted by Müllenhoff, *Zur deutschen Mythologie*, ZfdA. XII, 406.

about in a circle and by impious songs."[1] The sword-dance in honor of Tiu and the choral songs were likewise from an early time accompanied by sacrifice.[2] Even Saxo still mentions in connection with the sacrifice at Upsala "the effeminate gestures and the clapping of the mimes on the stage, and the unmanly clatter of the bells."[3]

There are numerous detached references to heathen sacrifices in the religious literature of the early Middle Ages. In Burchard of Worms we read of "nocturnal sacrifices to the devils" on graves and at funerals, of song and festive meals, of jest (*joca*) and dance, of the bringing of tapers, bread, or gifts in general, to wells, stones, and cross-roads. Similar evidence may be found in Eligius, the *Indiculus Superstitionum* and elsewhere. These observances are doubtless partly old and partly new, partly universal and partly local. They furthermore represent soul cult, nature-worship (more especially of water and wells), and gifts to the gods, without our being able in each particular instance to distinguish sharply between these several sides. Most of the gifts here named were bloodless, but in the case of persons sacrificed to water, as was at times done, the victims were drowned. The customs here forbidden must from the nature of the case, even in prehistoric pagan times, have been popular observances rather than part of the public cult.

For the Scandinavian peoples the material at our disposal is far more abundant. Numerous instances of human sacrifices are recorded. The Norsemen were dreaded in Western Europe more especially on account of their practice of cutting the

[1] From the *Dialogues* of Gregory in Waitz, *Scriptores rerum Langobardorum*, p. 524.

[2] Proceeding from Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 24, and Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmen*, 5, 246, Müllenhoff has treated this union of dance, music, procession, and sacrifice in his essay *Über den Schwerttanz* (1871) and in an earlier *programm*, *De antiquissima Germanorum poesi chorica* (1847).

[3] Saxo, HD. VI, 278 (Elton's translation, p. 228). Concerning bells, see Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntefeste*, pp. 395 ff., and Otte, *Glockenkunde* (1858).

"bloody eagle" (*blódhǫrn*), in which they cut away the ribs of their victim near the spinal column and through the openings thus made drew out the lungs, doubtless as a sacrifice to their gods. In their own land criminals and slaves were, on the occasion of the meeting of the *thing*, still sacrificed on the altar or drowned in the sacred pond. At times royal and even sacred blood had to flow; in a period of great famine the Swedes had during the first year sacrificed oxen, the second year men, and still the crops continued to fail. "Then held the great men council together, and were of one accord that this scarcity was because of Domald their king, and withal that they should sacrifice him for the plenty of the year; yea, that they should set on him and slay him, and redden the seats of the gods with the blood of him; and even so they did."[1] For similar reasons the Swedes burnt king Olaf Tree-shaver (*tré-telgja*) in his house and "gave him to Odhin, offering him up for the plenty of the year."[2] Another king, Aun or Ani by name, at Upsala, had contrived to prolong his life to an unusual limit by sacrificing nine of his ten sons to Odhin. Although already imbecile from old age, he would have slain the tenth also, had the people not prevented it.[3] When king Vikarr and his men were detained by adverse winds, the lot designated the king himself as the victim to be offered up for obtaining favorable winds, and Starkad obeys the decree by hanging king Vikarr on a tree, and piercing him with a spear.[4]

Not from the sagas alone, but from times that are wholly historical, accounts of human sacrifices have come down to us. Thus jarl Hakon in his fight with the Jomsvikings offers up his son to Thorgerdh Hǫlgabrudh, and king Olaf Tryggvason threatened that if he was to return to paganism, he would have

[1] *Ynglingasaga* (*Heimskringla*), Chapter 18 (*Saga Library*, III, 29).
[2] *Ynglingasaga* (*Heimskringla*), Chapter 47 (*Saga Library*, III, 66).
[3] *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 29.
[4] *Gautrekssaga*, Chapter 7.

to hold a big sacrifice; "and neither will I choose hereto thralls and evildoers; but rather will I choose gifts for the gods the noblest of men," whom he thereupon proceeds to call out by name from among those present.[1] The Kristni Saga relates, in connection with the period of conflict between heathen and Christians in Iceland, how the former proposed to sacrifice to their gods two persons from each district, but were unable to secure the victims, whereas the Christians easily found two who were willing "to devote themselves to a purer life." On the island of Gotland the inhabitants sacrificed their sons and daughters, as the *Historia Gotlandiæ* informs us. The accounts that Thietmar of Merseburg and Adam of Bremen give of the great human sacrifices at Lethra and Upsala may be somewhat exaggerated; even though we allowed large deductions, what remained would still be considerable. When a ship was launched, it was let run over the body of a victim, whose blood thus colored the rollers (*hlunn-rodh*, "roller-reddening"), a custom that is parallel to that of walling up a child in the foundations of a building. There is no trace, however, of this latter custom among the Scandinavians, although there are a number of instances of it on record among other Teutonic peoples.

A description is given in the saga of Hakon the Good of a sacrificial feast on the occasion of the *thing*.

It was the olden custom that when a blood-offering should be, all the bonders should come to the place where was the temple, bringing with them all the victuals they had need of while the feast should last; and at that feast should all men have ale with them. There also was slain cattle of every kind, and horses withal; and all the blood that came from them was called hlaut, but hlaut-bowls were they called wherein the blood stood, and the hlaut-tein a rod made in the fashion of a sprinkler. With all the hlaut should the stalls of the gods be reddened, and the walls of the temple within and without, and the men-folk also besprinkled; but the flesh was to be sodden for the feasting of men. Fires were to be made in the midst

[1] *Olaf Tryggvasonssaga* (*Heimskringla*), Chapter 74 (*Saga Library*, III, 319).

of the floor of the temple, with caldrons thereover, and the health-cups should be borne over the fire. But he who made the feast and was the lord thereof should sign the cups and all the meat; and first should be drunken Odhin's cup for the victory and dominion of the king, and then the cup of Njordhr and the cup of Freyr for plentiful seasons and peace. Thereafter were many men wont to drink the Bragi-cup; and men drank also a cup to their kinsmen dead who had been noble, and that was called the cup of memory.[1]

Those who sat down to this feast were called *sudhnautar*, *i.e.* partakers of the sodden. It was not permissible to omit the cup in memory of the dead. Vows made over the cup occur, *Helgakvidha Hjǫrvardhssonar*, 32, 33. On the occasion of such a sacrificial banquet Hakon was reluctantly prevailed upon to take part in the heathen ceremonial, which the nobility refused to abandon.

In the Scandinavian North these sacrifices were usually designed to promote fertility, and in German folklore too we meet with a number of usages, connected with agriculture and the breeding of cattle, that are to be classed among sacrifices.[2] They sought to ward off harmful influences and to promote the fruitfulness of the soil. It is obvious that the same ceremonies that were employed to conjure pestilence, hailstorms, and similar calamities would, from their very nature, also serve to insure the success of the harvest and the welfare of the cattle.

A prominent place among the expiatory sacrifices was occupied by the need-fires, which doubtless owed their existence to the presence of plague among the cattle, but gradually fell

[1] Saga of king Hakon the Good (*Heimskringla*), Chapter 16 (*Saga Library*, III, 165–166).

[2] J. Grimm had already collected a considerable amount of material regarding these customs, which was still further increased by Mannhardt. The more important recent works on the subject are: H. Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntefeste im heidnischen und christlichen Cultus, mit besonderer Beziehung auf Niedersachsen*, and especially U. Jahn, *Die deutschen Opfergebräuche bei Ackerbau und Viehzucht* (1884).

together with the St. John fires. We do not venture to decide whether this custom is based solely on the idea of the purifying power of fire as a natural element, or whether the sun is also concerned in the matter, although the use of the wheel (as emblem of the solar disk) might seem to point in the latter direction, one method of generating this fire being the turning of a piece of wood inside a wheel; a burning wheel was also hurled in the air or rolled down a hill. As a rule, the flame was kindled by rubbing two pieces of wood against each other, all the fires in the village having previously been extinguished. The *Indiculus Superstitionum et Paganiarum*, drawn up in the year 743 by the synod of Listines, speaks of "fire produced by friction, *i.e. nodfyr*," and in the preceding year another synod had referred to "those sacrilegious fires which are called *niedfyr*." Through this fire the infected flocks are driven: swine, cattle, horses, and geese. Men also leap through the flames and blacken their faces with the cinders. With the firebrands fruit trees, fields, and pastures are fumigated, and they are also used to start new fires on the hearths. Burnt-out cinders and ashes are placed in the mangers and strewed about in the fields. There is nothing to show that these usages were connected with particular deities. That their origin is to be traced back to heathen times is at least probable.

Pagan origin is certain in the case of the processions held of old for Isis, Nerthus, Freyr, etc. These are also condemned in the *Indiculus* under the head of "the image which is carried about through the fields (*per campos*)." The greater part of these processions may be explained as representing the entry of a particular deity at the beginning of a new season. They too are connected with the yearly increase of field, pasture, and orchard. With songs the images were carried *per campos*: people went about with a plough or with animals for the sacrifice, to promote the fertility of the soil.

On every hand there still exist among the people various sacrifices and observances at sowing and reaping, either to insure fruitfulness for the coming year or to obtain some omen in regard to it, the observances frequently bearing a decidedly magic character. The question has been raised, whether these *disjecta membra* can be combined to form a connected whole; whether, in other words, these separate observances constituted part of an ancient pagan sacrifice ritual. Observing certain necessary restrictions, Jahn has attempted to reconstruct such a whole. According to this point of view, both the expiatory sacrifices in time of disaster and the animal sacrifices for the furtherance of agriculture and the breeding of cattle, including the private sacrifices of a family and the public ones of a community, represent ancient pagan customs that persist among the people.[1]

We shall here attempt to give a sketch of such a public sacrifice, without presuming to determine whether it actually ever took place with this degree of completeness in an historical *milieu*. At the approach of the heat of summer, both the herdsman and the husbandman fear the perils with which this season is fraught: the plague that attacks the flocks, the hail that beats down the grain. To ward these off, they choose for a sacrifice their finest animals (or those which on that particular day were the last to reach pasture) and adorn them with garlands, horses, cattle, and dogs being set apart for Wuotan, swine and cats for Frija, he-goats, geese, and fowl for Thunar. Twigs are cut from special kinds of trees, and, interwoven with flowers, these are fastened to the tails of the animals intended for the sacrifice. Drenched with dew, these switches are turned into magic brooms, which are put to various uses: cattle are struck on the back with them to drive away the demons of sickness; stables and barns are swept with

[1] In what follows we give a summary of the *Schlussbetrachtung* of Jahn, pp. 323–330.

them; they are planted on the dung-hill; and they are hung as a talisman over the door of the house. The milk of the cows thus exorcised is, with eggs and herbs, prepared for the sacrificial meal. The procession now begins. Leading the sacrificial animals, bedecked with garlands and colored ribbons, and preceded by an image of a god, the procession passes through the village, thereupon makes a circuit of the fields, a halt being made at each of the four corners to pray to Thunar that he may spare the fields, and finally ends up at the village well, into which each of the participants throws a sacrificial cake for Frija, and from which he thereupon takes a drink. From the height of the water in the well predictions are made concerning the success of the year's harvest. Water is drawn into a cask and taken home to act as a safeguard, in time of need, against misfortune and the evil spirits.

While the herdsmen and husbandmen are thus making the rounds, the children visit the houses of the village, gathering fuel to start a big fire on the village square or a neighboring hill. In it they burn the figure of a doll, *i.e.* the evil spirit or witch.

Meanwhile evening has come. The heads of the animals to be sacrificed are cut off; dogs and cats are burnt on the pile in their entirety, of the other animals only the hide, the bones, and the entrails. With dance and song they circle around the flaming fire, and from the smoke all manner of things are prophesied regarding weather and harvest, and life and death in the family. As in the case of the need-fire, people run about with the flaring brands or leap through the flames. The meal has now been made ready: the meat sodden, the sacrificial cakes baked, beer and minne-drink prepared. All make merry at the banquet that follows, every one taking part, and even the stranger not being excluded. The feast continues through the night, and remnants of the food are taken home; they are powerful magic charms against sickness and calamity. Similarly,

at the slaughtering of the sacrificial animals people show great eagerness to get possession of certain leavings.

It is evident, therefore, that the various observances are capable of being united to form a connected whole, even though we are unable to assign it to any particular pagan period.

CHAPTER XX

CALENDAR AND FESTIVALS

The ancient Teutons had no religious calendar, any more than they had an organized priesthood or a fixed ritual. They did, however, have certain stated times for coming together and for sacrificing. In the later calendars, both the runic calendars still found here and there among the peasants, and in the popular and ecclesiastical calendars, we find observations and rules of the most diverse origin. Of these, Teutonic paganism has furnished by far the smaller share, later popular customs and rules derived from the Roman and Christian calendar predominating. For all that, it is worth the while to consider what may be gathered from the division of time concerning pagan ideas and customs.

First of all, it is to be noted that in the names of the days of the week the heathen gods lived on with such persistency that no opposition on the part of the church was able to dislodge them. In vain did Jonas Ogmundi (Jon Ogmundsson), bishop of Holum in Iceland, attempt to replace them by numerals. These names themselves are, however, of comparatively recent origin, having been translated from Latin in the fourth or fifth century. This is clearly shown by the correspondence between the Roman and Teutonic gods for each day of the week, a correspondence which cannot be accidental. Hence, also, the Teutonic Sunday and Monday can in no way be adduced in support of Cæsar's account of the worship of Sol and Luna by the Teutons. For the *dies Saturni* no corresponding Teutonic divinity suggested itself. In Norse the day is called bath-day or wash-day (Löverdag).

Old and genuinely Teutonic is the counting, not by days and summers, but by nights and winters. We cannot, to be sure, infer from this with any degree of certainty that they regarded darkness and cold as "the germinating period of warmth and light." The year seems to have been originally divided into two parts, as is indicated by various legal observances and phrases: "im rise und im lôve," "im rûwen und im blôten," "bî strô und bî grase" (Weistümer).[1] By taking into account the solstices and equinoxes this division is then extended to four seasons. Of old the winter marked the beginning of the year; October is called Winterfylleth (winter full moon) in Bede. Of the ceremonies observed at the beginning of the year there are still some survivals in the customs connected with Michaelmas. We also class under this head that feast lasting three days in which the Saxons celebrated their victories.[2] In any case far more evidence can be adduced in support of an original division into two than into three seasons, notwithstanding the fact that Tacitus mentions *hiems*, *ver*, and *aestas*.[3]

A large number of names were in use to indicate the months; the glossary in Weinhold's book enumerates more than two hundred. Ever since the time of Charles the Great the church attempted to replace these indigenous names by Latin ones, at first without success.[4] In the case of some of these names the meaning is doubtful, others are perspicuous, referring to time and weather, pastoral and agricultural pursuits. Only a few have religious significance; among these are certainly not to be classed the names of those spring months from which Bede deduced the goddesses Hreda and Eostre (Ostara). Folklore at times attributes a mythological significance

[1] Weinhold, *Über die deutsche Jahrteilung*, p. 16.

[2] Widukind, *Res gestæ*, I, 12.

[3] "Winter, spring, and summer." *Germania*, Chapter 26.

[4] A number of Teutonic names of months may be found in Einhard, *Vita Karoli imperatoris*, Chapter 29, and in Beda, *De temporum ratione*, Chapter 13.

to these names where we do not recognize any such survival of Teutonic paganism. Thus February is called Sporke (Spurkele)[1] and Wiwermond, the month in which the women rule, make the weather, and strew out the snow.[2] Cult is indicated by such names as Hâlegmônad[3] (September), the month of the great harvest festival that brought the year to a close. Charles the Great transferred the name to December, the month that was hallowed by the birth of the Saviour. Blôtmônad points to heathen sacrifices, Bryllepsmûn to the bridal processions in November.

The connection of individual gods with set periods of the year is extremely uncertain; assigning definite months to them is entirely arbitrary. What has direct reference to cult is, of course, better established, although the data are meagre. The Tamfana festival of the Marsi, during which Germanicus in a star-lit night surprised the drunken multitude,[4] seems to have fallen in the beginning of winter, that of Nerthus in spring.

Set times are indicated also by the "ungebotene Gerichte,"[5] continuing down to the Middle Ages, which point now to a division into three, and again into two, seasons. We read sometimes of three yearly gatherings, — held on different dates in different localities, — at other times of four, and then again of two (the May *thing*, on Walpurgis, the first of May, and the autumn *thing*, at Martinmas), or even of one, as in the case of the Merovingians, who held a campus Martius, and the Carlovingians, who had a campus Majus. The Icelandic *allthing* came in June. Distinct from these stated times are the expressly convoked "gebotene Gerichte."[6]

The Ynglinga Saga, Chapter 8, as also the later Olafshelga

[1] See Grimm, GDS.4, p. 64.

[2] Another example, already mentioned on p. 214 and taken from Jon Arnason's *Islenzkar Thjodhsögur og Æfintyri*, may be found in Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, p. 362.

[3] "Holy month."

[4] Tacitus, *Annals*, I, 50.

[5] "Tribunals not specially summoned." Examples may be found in Grimm, DRA., pp. 821–826.

[6] "Tribunals specially summoned."

Saga, Chapters 104 and 112, mentions three annual sacrifices: towards winter offerings were made for a prosperous year (*til árs*), in the middle of the winter for fertility (*til gróðhrar*), and towards summer for victory (*til sigrs*). We do not, however, regard these three divisions as representing three seasons, as many scholars have done, for these three sacrifices all take place during the winter, at the beginning, the middle, and the end. The first probably came in the early part of October, and the last in April. That the second one coincided with the Yule festival is hardly likely. No mention is made of special gods to whom these sacrifices were made.

The great festival in Scandinavia was the Yule festival. We do not regard it as ancient, or as common to all Teutonic tribes. Such traces as are found of it in the folklore of the other Teutonic peoples are of Roman and Christian origin. It is probable that the festival is of a relatively recent date, of about the ninth century perhaps, and that the characteristics of the festival of the dead have been transferred to it. In the last century of heathenism, whose history we know with some detail, it was held in high esteem by the Scandinavians. At first it was perhaps celebrated in October or February, while later on it was merged with the Christian festival of the nativity.

From the very beginning the time (seasons) of the year in which the Teutonic festivals were held was intimately associated with the character of the festival itself. At first they were concerned with the administration of justice and the pursuit of war; under the Frankish kings the *campi* still bear in large measure the character of military reviews. Gradually and, so far as folklore is concerned, entirely, justice and war yield to the tillage of the soil and the breeding of cattle. Their original nature, that of a popular gathering and of peaceful converse, such as we find it in the festival of the Nerthus nations, was still retained in the last period of paganism in Iceland, where the autumnal assemblies were characterized by

all manner of festivities and games, such as ball-play, for which "play-halls" were erected, as we are told in the Eyrbyggja Saga, Chapter 43.

In the North we also read of great festivals, recurring at intervals of nine years. Thietmar of Merseburg (eleventh century) gives the following account[1] of such a festival among the Danes: "There is in those regions a place by the name of Lederun, the capital of that kingdom, in the district which is called Selon, where every ninth year, in the month of January, after the time when we celebrate Epiphany, all the people assembled and sacrificed to their gods ninety-nine men and the same number of horses, together with dogs and cocks, — the latter in default of hawks, — feeling assured that these would render them services with the gods of the lower world, and appease the gods for the crimes which they had committed." The reasons which Thietmar assigns for this great sacrifice at Leire (*Lethra*) in Seeland cannot be considered satisfactory: prisoners of war — if we may consider these victims such — and animals of the chase (hawks) are unheard of as an expiatory sacrifice. Concerning the festival at Upsala Adam of Bremen[2] tells us that no one was exempted from the ceremonies, king and people alike sent their gifts. Even those who had already become Christians had to provide a ransom. As to the sacrifice itself: "From every living thing that is male, nine heads are offered, with the blood of which it is customary to appease the gods. The bodies are hung up in the grove which adjoins the temple." Each tree of this grove is considered sacred "on account of the death and the putrefaction of the victims." Dogs and horses hung there in the midst of human bodies; a Christian had counted seventy-two bodies altogether. At this sacrifice are sung "divers unseemly songs." From this account, which is not altogether free from

[1] *Chronicle*, I, Chapter 9.
[2] *Gesta*, IV, 27, 28.

embellishment, it would appear that the victims were hung up on the trees, as in the days of Tacitus. The victims were male persons and animals, including, as at Leire, dogs and horses. These later accounts of sacrificial ceremonies are not lacking, therefore, in genuine old Teutonic features.

CHAPTER XXI

MAGIC AND DIVINATION

JACOB GRIMM begins his chapter on Magic[1] by drawing a distinction between divine *Wundern* and devilish *Zaubern*, not altogether justly so, inasmuch as Teutonic paganism did not observe the distinction. He is happier when he defines the various notions entering into the conception as including "doing, sacrificing, spying, soothsaying, singing, sign-making (secret writing), bewildering, dazing, cooking, healing, and casting lots."[2] For the same notions we commonly use the expressions practising magic, witchcraft, divination, soothsaying, and conjuring (Frisian *tjoene*, Danish *trylle*).

Magic constitutes an important part of every religion, some scholars regarding it as the most original element, others as "a disease of religion."[3] Such questions, however, form part of the general phenomenology of religion and not of the history of each special religion. Without entering, therefore, upon this general problem, we shall here attempt to arrange what is known to us of magic and divination among the Teutonic peoples. Both folklore and Norse literature furnish a wealth of material, although much of what is found in the former is of more recent origin.

The first question that confronts us is that of the connection between magic on the one hand, and mythology and cult on the other. Many a magic charm and many an incantation is efficacious in itself, without resort to higher powers, but as a

[1] DM.[4], 861. [2] DM.[4], 867.

[3] See the more recent discussion by Jevons, *The Science of Religion* (*International Monthly*, April, May, 1901).

rule witchcraft is connected with a belief in souls.[1] Thus the young Svipdag learns from his deceased mother Groa[2] the magic songs which are to shield him from all manner of danger. The magician and the vǫlva stand in relationship with the spirits. At the same time magic power proceeds from the Æsir, Vanir, giants,[3] dwarfs, and elves as well. It is a well-known fact that Odhin is preëminently the god of magic, but Thor, Tyr, Heimdallr, etc., are also invoked in the practice of magic. The power of magic in such cases rests ultimately, as Uhland[4] has put it, upon the basis of an actual event that has taken place in the world of gods or spirits.

The exact connection between the magical and the mythical is by no means always clear. In the first Merseburg Charm[5] the effect of the incantation for the loosing of bonds seems to be intimately connected with the work of the Idisi. But *Hávamál*, 148, and *Grógaldr*, 10, mention incantations that produce the same result without a single hint of a mythological basis. Magic of a similar kind, but covered with a Christian varnish, is to be found in Bede. He tells us[6] of a youth who had been picked up on the field of battle and been taken prisoner. All efforts to bind him were in vain, because his brother, an abbot and presbyter, thinking him dead, was saying masses for the repose of his soul. The mass for the dead is here attended by the same result as the magic incantation that looses bonds. In the second Merseburg Charm the connection between the mythical incident contained in the introduction and the charm proper is even less apparent. It is at any rate of some importance to know that myth and magic charm are linked together. Hence, also, at the dawning of the light of

[1] This connection was pointed out as early as 1830 by Walter Scott in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*. Among more recent writers Mogk and Finnur Jónsson may be mentioned.

[2] *Grógaldr*, 6–14.

[3] For an imprecation by the giants, see *Atlamál*, 32.

[4] *Schriften*, VI, 253.

[5] See above, pp. 127–128.

[6] HE. IV, 22.

day, some incantations lose their power, as may, for example, be inferred from an otherwise somewhat obscure[1] strophe (*Hávamál*, 160)[2]:

Before Delling's[3] doors the dwarf Thjodrerir sang his magic song: strength he sang to the Æsir, skill to the elves, and wisdom to Hroptatyr.

Various gods are invoked in the practice of magic: Tyr, for example, at the graving of sword runes, which conferred magic power[4] on certain swords, such as Tyrfing in the Hervarar Saga. The names of the Æsir and elves seem to possess special magic power.[5] The magic effect produced by particular words is likewise seen in the practice of erecting a so-called spite-stake (*nídhstǫng*). These bore an inscription and were surmounted at times by a human figure, or again by the head of a horse turned in the direction of the dwelling of the enemy.[6] The best known example is that of the scald Egil,[7] who erected a *nídhstǫng* against king Eirikr and his wife, bearing the following words: "I here erect a *nídhstǫng* and direct this spite (*nídh*) against king Eirikr and queen Gunnhild; I erect this spite against the spirits (*landvœttir*) that inhabit this land, so that they may all fail of the right path, and none find or reach his destination before they have driven king Eirikr and queen Gunnhild out of the land." The magic stake and the conjuration were accordingly also thought to be effective against the spirits of the land (*landvœttir*).

The Edda gives a list of magic charms at three various times: *Hávamál*, 145–163; *Grógaldr*, 6–14; *Sigrdrífumál*, 6–13. In these passages a number of things are enumerated which

[1] See Uhland, *Schriften*, III, 244; VI, 238, and also Müllenhoff, DA. V, 273, who offers a slightly different interpretation.

[2] Edition of Symons.

[3] Delling, the father of day.

[4] See the *Saga Book of the Viking Club*, I, 130, 150.

[5] *Hávamál*, 158. See also Krist Myrop, *Navns magt* (1887).

[6] Examples are cited by K. Maurer, *Bekehrung des Norwegischen Stammes*, II, 64–65.

[7] *Egilssaga*, Chapter 57.

were sought to be obtained by magic, such as help in sickness and danger, aid against enemies, safeguard against harmful influences, acquisition of knowledge and skill, safety in journeys on land and on sea, power to heal wounds. It would be quite impossible, in the case of the Teutons as with other peoples, to enumerate all the benefits that were looked for from magic in both public and private life, the pursuit of agriculture, of cattle breeding, etc. Magic also plays a considerable part in the art of healing. In all this it is quite impossible to draw a sharp line of division between what is pagan and what is Christian: much that comes under this rubric may be of medieval origin, such as the accounts of supernatural powers, of metamorphoses,[1] of magic food and draughts of forgetfulness, of magic hoods (*Tarnkappe*) and of hidden treasures. The same observation applies to the practices condemned by the *Indiculus Superstitionum* and the *Homilia de Sacrilegiis*, such as philacteries and incantations.[2]

Conjuring is effected by means of the magic song (Norse *galdr*), and the magic charms employed usually derive their power from the runes that are graven on them. These runes among the Teutons are older than the runic letters, which they borrowed from the Latin alphabet, and with which the marks (*notæ*) on the magic lots in Tacitus have accordingly nothing in common. · *Run* occurs in numerous proper names of an early date: Sigrun, Hildrun, Albrun, Heidrun,[3] etc. Halibruna in Jordanes[4] is another early example. The word "rûn," from the same root as the German *raunen* (to whisper), "signifies, in the first instance, whispering, secret speech, and then mystery in general, in doctrine, witchcraft, song, symbol, or letter."[5] The designation applies to magic sign as well as to magic song (Old Norse *ljódh*, *spjǫll*, *galdr*). Thus the lists of magic

[1] See K. Weinhold, *Märchen vom Eselsmenschen* (SBA. XXIX, Berlin, 1893).
[2] *Indiculus*, X, XII.
[3] See Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, I, 1062 f.
[4] DOAG., Chapter 24.
[5] Uhland, *Schriften*, VI, 225, 226.

charms in the Edda referred to above are called runes. The ancient connection between incantation and runic symbol crops out in a later romantic saga,[1] in which the sorceress Busla utters specially potent *galdrar* (plural of *galdr*, magic song), to bewitch king Hring. To these incantations a series of runic letters, six in number, are subjoined, which, while also forming a sort of riddle, are at the same time thought to possess magic power.[2] The Egils Saga, Chapter 72, furnishes another example of the great power of runic signs. In an effort to cure a sick peasant girl, false runes had been graved on fish gills (*tálkn*); Egil discovers this, replaces the false runes with the true, and an instant cure results. It is therefore not surprising to find the knowledge of runes embracing practically every domain of superhuman power: he who is possessed of "ever-during runes and life-runes" is all-powerful and is safeguarded against every misfortune.[3]

A specifically Norse form of witchcraft is called *seidhr*. By some it has been thought that *seidhr* was introduced from Finland, but while this is not impossible, it has at least not been clearly proved. *Seidhr* is attributed to Odhin, *Ynglinga-saga*, Chapter 7, and *Lokasenna*, 24; to Gullveig, *Völuspa*, 22. The word is usually employed in an evil sense, referring to base, harmful arts which cause tempests and thunderstorms, kill enemies, and create delusions. However, it also occurs as applying to magic arts that are used as safeguards, or which serve to divine the future.[4] King Harald Fairhair, we are told, was violently opposed to these sorcerers and had eighty of them burnt, among them one of his own sons.[5]

Seidhr was practised on an elevated seat (*seidh-hjallr*), and consisted of beautiful, alluring, majestic songs, sung by the

[1] *Saga Herraudhs ok Bósa*, Chapter 5.
[2] See Uhland, *Schriften*, VI, 248. [3] *Rigsthula*, 44–46.
[4] Numerous examples are cited by K. von Maurer, *Bekehrung des Norwegischen Stammes*, II, 136 ff.
[5] *Saga of Harald Fairhair* (*Heimskringla*), Chapter 36.

seidhmadhr (man) or *seidhkona* (woman), or by their attendants. Thus the Qrvarodds Saga[1] tells of a vǫlva and *seidhkona* Heidhr, who was accompanied by fifteen boys and fifteen girls, all with good voices, who were to sing the song. The *seidhkona* seems to have been of more frequent occurrence than the *seidhmadhr*. The Ynglinga Saga, Chapter 7, explains this as due to the contemptible character of the magic arts, hardly correctly so, inasmuch as the sorceress and prophetess were highly esteemed and wielded great power.

Women who practised magic and soothsaying were called *vǫlur* (plural of *vǫlva*). While the vǫlva, or *spákona* (wise woman), is not necessarily a *seidhkona* (*seidhr*-woman), the distinction between the two classes is frequently lost sight of, and more than one vǫlva is also said to be versed in *seidhr*. The word "vǫlva," derived from *vǫlr* (staff), signifies staff-bearer, the name referring either to the magic staff of the vǫlva or to the staff with which she wanders from place to place.[2] To acquire her supernatural power the vǫlva sometimes for several nights in succession sat out in the open air (*spáfǫr*, wisdom-faring; *útiseta*, sitting outside), where she then received revelations from Odhin, or from spirits and the dead. Finnur Jónsson is of the opinion that such vǫlur, in the character of wandering sorceresses and soothsayers, were found in Norway alone, whereas in Iceland they retired into the background, only a few women who otherwise followed the ordinary walks of life possessing magic power. But wandering vǫlur are to be found in Iceland and Greenland[3] as well: witness for Iceland, Oddbjǫrg in the Viga Glums Saga, Chapter 12, and for Greenland, Thorbjǫrg, "the little vǫlva," whose doings are so picturesquely described in the Eiriks Saga Raudha. We quote the passage in its entirety, because it presents the clearest picture of a heathen ceremony that we possess. On account

[1] Chapter 2. [2] See Müllenhoff, DA. V, 42.
[3] Greenland derived its culture from Iceland.

of dearth, famine, and failure in the catch of fish, it was resolved in Greenland that Thorbjǫrg, "the little vǫlva," should be consulted. She was the only one remaining of nine sisters, who had all been prophetesses. "It was Thorbjǫrg's custom in the winters to go to entertainments, and she was especially sought after at the homes of those who were curious to know their fate, or what manner of season might be in store for them." Thorkel, "the chief yeoman in the neighborhood," was accordingly to consult her regarding the famine.

A high seat was prepared for her, in which a cushion filled with poultry feathers was placed. When she came in the evening, with the man who had been sent to meet her, she was clad in a dark-blue cloak, fastened with a strap, and set with stones quite down to the hem. She wore glass beads around her neck, and upon her head a black lamb-skin hood, lined with white cat-skin. In her hands she carried a staff, upon which there was a knob, which was ornamented with brass, and set with stones up about the knob. Circling her waist she wore a girdle of touch-wood, and attached to it a great skin pouch, in which she kept the charms which she used when she was practising her sorcery. She wore upon her feet shaggy calf-skin shoes, with long, tough latchets, upon the ends of which there were large brass buttons. She had cat-skin gloves upon her hands, which were white inside and lined with fur. When she entered, all of the folk felt it to be their duty to offer her becoming greetings. She received the salutations of each individual according as he pleased her. Yeoman Thorkel took the sibyl by the hand, and led her to the seat which had been made ready for her. Thorkel bade her run her eyes over man and beast and home. She had little to say concerning all these. The tables were brought forth in the evening, and it remains to be told what manner of food was prepared for the prophetess. A porridge of goat's beestings was made for her, and for meat there were dressed the hearts of every kind of beasts which could be obtained there. She had a brass spoon, and a knife with a handle of walrus tusk, with a double hasp of brass around the haft, and from this the point was broken. And when the tables were removed, Yeoman Thorkel approaches Thorbjǫrg, and asks how she is pleased with the home, and the character of the folk, and how speedily she would be likely to become aware of that concerning which he had questioned her, and which the people were anxious to know. She replied that she could not give an opinion in this matter before the morrow, after that she had slept

there through the night. And on the morrow, when the day was far spent, such preparations were made as were necessary to enable her to accomplish her soothsaying. She bade them bring here those women who knew the incantation which she required to work her spells, and which she called Warlocks; but such women were not to be found. Thereupon a search was made throughout the house, to see whether any one knew this incantation. Then says Gudrid: "Although I am neither skilled in the black art nor a sibyl, yet my foster-mother, Halldis, taught me in Iceland that spell-song which she called Warlocks." Thorbjǫrg answered: "Then art thou wise in season!" Gudrid replies: "This is an incantation and ceremony of such a kind, that I do not mean to lend it any aid, for that I am a Christian woman." Thorbjǫrg answers: "It might so be that thou couldst give thy help to the company here, and still be no worse woman than before; however, I leave it with Thorkel to provide for my needs." Thorkel now so urged Gudrid, that she said she must needs comply with his wishes. The women they made a ring round about, while Thorbjǫrg sat up on the spell-daïs. Gudrid then sang the song, so sweet and well, that no one remembered ever before to have heard the melody sung with so fair a voice as this. The sorceress thanked her for the song, and said: "She has indeed lured many spirits hither, who think it pleasant to hear this song, those who were wont to forsake us hitherto and refuse to submit themselves to us. Many things are now revealed to me, which hitherto have been hidden, both from me and from others. And I am able to announce that this period of famine will not endure longer, but the season will mend as spring approaches. The visitation of disease, which has been so long upon you, will disappear sooner than expected." Thorbjǫrg also prophesies a happy marriage and a safe return to Iceland to Gudrid, and besides foretells the future of many others.[1]

We see from this account how much importance was attached to dress and even to food, and also that the vǫlva was herself dependent upon the women that knew the "warlocks" (*vardhlokkur*), to lure the spirits. Whether only soothsaying is intended here, as would seem to be the case, or whether the sorceress, through the influence that the songs exert upon the spirits, effects the cessation of the famine, is not altogether clear. At any rate, the vǫlva represents a remarkable combination of inward and outward witchcraft. She is herself prophetess and

[1] A. M. Reeves, *The Finding of Wineland the Good* (1890), pp. 33, 34.

sorceress, but is at the same time dependent, in the practice of her art, upon her seat, her dress, and her song. These do not, however, constitute signs which she interprets, but are merely aids to her magic and divination. While descent (nine sisters) and tradition (Gudrid has learned the song from her foster-mother) influence the possession of this art, there is not a single trace of Shamanism, the being inspired by the spirits of deceased Shamans. At the same time the magic power bears the character of divine art rather than of human skill. Grimm's words, "Imagination, tradition, knowledge of medicinal properties, poverty, and idleness turned women into sorceresses, while the last three causes also turned shepherds into sorcerers,"[1] apply to later medieval conditions alone.

Up to this point we have not always been able to distinguish sharply between sorcery and soothsaying. We now pass to a consideration of divination proper. From Tacitus[2] we know that the Teutons attached great importance to "omens and lots." Ariovistus' refusal to fight[3] was explained by the prisoners on the score of "the custom which obtained among the Teutons that the mothers should by means of lots and prophecies determine whether or not it would be advantageous to fight a battle." According to Ammianus Marcellinus (XIV, 9, 10), the Alemanni felt all their courage desert them when the auspices or the authority of the sacred rights prohibited their entering battle. A number of other passages that deal with divination might be cited, from the historians (*e.g.* Agathias, II, 6), from the *vitæ* of the missionaries, and from the Norse sagas, but it will be more profitable to subject the passages of Tacitus to a somewhat closer scrutiny[4] and to group our material around these.

[1] DM.⁴, p. 868.
[2] *Germania*, Chapter 10.
[3] Cæsar, *B. G.*, I, 50.
[4] See the commentary of Müllenhoff, DA. IV, pp. 222–233.

Tacitus distinguishes omens and lots (*auspicia* and *sortes*). Concerning the latter he remarks:

> The mode of consulting lots is simple. They cut off the twig of a fruit-bearing tree and cut it into little wands. These they thereupon distinguish by certain marks, and scatter them at random and fortuitously upon a white garment. Thereupon the priest of the state, if the occasion be a public one, or the father of a household, if it be private, after an invocation of the gods, and lifting his eyes up to heaven, thrice takes up one wand at a time, and interprets the wands taken up in accordance with the marks previously made on them. If they forbid, no further consultation concerning the same matter takes place on that day; but if they permit, a confirmation by means of omens is still required in addition.[1]

However simple this mode of consulting lots may have been, the words of Tacitus are hardly such as not to require comment. The first question that presents itself is just what was the nature of the marks upon the wands. If they stood for *yes* and *no*, which forsooth would have been the most simple of all, then what need was there for more than two pieces of wood, and for an interpretation besides? The marks from which the priest or father of the family divined with prayer (*cælum suspiciens*) the will of the gods must, therefore, have been something else than mere signs for *yes* and *no*, although the answer was in the main positive or negative (*permissum* or *prohibitum*).

With these bits of wood (*surculi*) in the account of Tacitus the Norse *blótspánn* ("sacrifice-chip," divining rod; plural *blótspœnnir*), showing that the lot was accompanied with sacrifice, and the Frisian *teni* (*teina*, twig), which we meet in Frisian judicial procedure, are to be compared. On these *teni* of the Frisians certain marks (*signa*) were made, belonging to individuals concerned in the suit. The procedure is described in the *lex Frisionum*. If a murder has been committed, lots are drawn by means of two pieces of wood, on one of which there is a sign of the cross, while the other is unmarked. Seven

[1] *Germania*, Chapter 10.

persons suspected by the plaintiff are brought forward, and if the unmarked lot be drawn, the guilty person is among these seven. Each of the latter thereupon makes his own sign upon a *teina*, the seven lots are covered over, an innocent child draws six of them, and the owner of the seventh is the guilty man. In like manner lots were drawn in case of disputes involving property. Here, accordingly, the lot designates particular persons.[1]

Tacitus places omens and lots alongside of each other, as is also done in *Hymiskvidha*, I :

> Divining rods they shook and blood inspected.

Concerning omens (*auspicia*) Tacitus notes the following:

> They also know how to consult the cries and the flight of birds: it is peculiar to this people that they in addition deduce presages and admonitions from horses. These are fed at public expense in sacred forests and groves, are milk-white and undefiled by human labor. Yoked to the sacred chariot they are accompanied by the priest and the king, or chief of the state, who carefully observe their neighing and snorting. In no other omen is greater faith reposed, not only by the people but also by the nobility, for they regard the priests [2] as the ministers of the gods, and the horses as cognizant of the divine will.[3]

The cries and the flight of birds were, therefore, looked upon as omens.[4] Some birds, as the swallow, stork, and eagle, bode good fortune; others, as the dove (*Leichentaube*), owl, and cuckoo, bode ill fortune. Tacitus dwells at some length on the most important oracle of all, the omens derived from horses. These horses were kept in the sacred groves, as were the white horses of Freyr near his sanctuary at Drontheim. They performed no daily tasks, but on the occasion of the

1 F. von Richthofen, *Friesische Rechtsgeschichte*, II, 451.

2 Perhaps "themselves" (*se*), *i.e.* the priests and nobles, is here the better reading.

3 *Germania*, Chapter 10.

4 Compare the collections of folklore, such as J. M. E. Saxley, *Birds of Omen in Shetland* (Viking Club, October, 1892), and L. A. J. W. Sloet, *De dieren in het germaansche volksgeloof en volksgebruik* (1887).

sacred procession were yoked to the chariot, as at the procession of Freyr in Sweden. The chariot of Nerthus, on the other hand, was drawn by cows. The remark that not only the people but also the nobility believed in these auspices is doubtless made in view of the sceptical attitude prominent Romans assumed toward such matters.

A third kind of divination through which the Teutons sought to forecast the outcome of war, Tacitus describes as follows:

> A prisoner of the tribe with which they are at war, taken in any manner whatsoever, they match with one of their own men, chosen for this purpose. Each fights with the weapons peculiar to his own country. The victory of either is regarded as an augury of the result of the war.[1]

It will be observed that this combat is not designed to bring the war to a close, but merely to obtain some presage as to its final issue. The single combats mentioned by Gregory of Tours (II, 2) and Paulus Diaconus (I, 12), that put an end to wars, are therefore not at all parallel.

A Scandinavian form of the single combat to decide disputes is the *hólmganga* ("holm-going"), which one could not refuse to make without being branded as infamous. Von Amira is sceptical towards the supposed religious significance of these combats and regards, in fact, most of the so-called ordeals (*Gottesurteile*) as Christian in origin.[2]

Tacitus does not make mention of divination in connection with sacrifice — soothsaying from blood and entrails and possibly also from the brains of animals[3] — nor of conjuring of the dead, although both of these forms of divination are doubtless to be regarded as Teutonic.

Alongside of these official forms, numerous conceptions and usages in connection with divination can be gathered from folklore, a few of which may here be briefly referred to.

[1] *Germania*, Chapter 10. [2] PG.², III, 217–220.
[3] *Indiculus Superstitionum*, XVI.

Dreams are of very frequent occurrence in both Norse and German literature, the best known example being perhaps Kriemhilt's dream in the *Nibelungenlied*. In the main these dreams bear, however, the earmarks of conscious literary fiction,[1] and Grimm, in his mythology, has accordingly attached little importance to them, despite the fact that certain special dreams, such as that of the treasure on the bridge,[2] as well as the putting faith in dreams in a new house, in the wedding night, in New Year's night, etc., have obtained wide currency in popular tales. The Teutons, at any rate, never possessed systematized oneiromancy. Omens from what is encountered on the street (*Angang*) and other occurrences are enumerated (*Reginsmál*, 20–24). Careful attention was paid to sneezing, slips in speech, stumbling, falling, and various aërial phenomena. Belief in lucky and unlucky days was also very widespread, Friday being, for instance, generally shunned for setting out on a journey, for contracting a marriage, or starting any undertaking. Most of these things are, however, to be regarded in the light of "ethnographic parallels" rather than as relics from pagan antiquity, although it is to be acknowledged that ecclesiastical regulations[3] and such writers as Burchard of Worms, Regino of Prüm, and Pirmin combat these popular customs as pagan in character.

[1] In the case of dreams in Norse literature this has been shown by W. Henzen, *Ueber die Träume in der altnordischen Sagalitteratur* (1890).

[2] J. Grimm, *Kl. Schr.*, III, 414–428.

[3] *Indiculus Superstitionum; Homilia de Sacrilegiis.*

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION

From the remarks made in the opening chapter, which we have found confirmed in the entire subsequent course of our study, it is evident that it will not be feasible to attempt to trace the characteristics that are common to the various phenomena with which we have been dealing. The pagan Teutons embrace so many tribes and peoples, scattered in lands so far apart, living under such widely different social and political conditions, exposed to so many foreign influences and spread over so long a period of time, that at the end as at the beginning of our survey we are forced to conclude that unity and uniform development are not to be found.

In bringing this study to a close, we cannot, however, refrain from casting a retrospective glance at the paths we have traversed, in order that we may indicate the rank that Teutonic religion, disjointed as its character undoubtedly is, deserves to occupy in the family of religions. The importance of the religion of the Teutons has frequently been overrated:[1] it has been compared with the Hindu, Persian, and Greek religions, and been held to represent a "spiritualization" of original monotheism. The myths, it is argued, contain a deep spiritual meaning, in that the day and year myth has been broadened into a world-myth, and more especially in that this world-drama has been invested with a moral significance,

[1] More especially by P. Asmus, *Die indogermanische Religion in den Hauptpunkten ihrer Entwickelung* (I, 1875; II, 1877), and also by E. von Hartmann, *Das religiöse Bewusstsein der Menschheit im Stufengang seiner Entwickelung* (1882).

everything being based on the guilt of the gods. This mythology, therefore, not only possesses a poetic beauty and an elegiac melancholy, but also represents a tragico-ethical sublimation (*Vertiefung*) of monotheism. Such theories appear very attractive, but it is hardly necessary to point out that Teutonic religion is not to be judged in accordance with the alleged philosophic content of the later mythical fragments of the Edda.

Teutonic paganism is, in fact, neither a simple growth on the soil of Indo-European life, nor has its mythology a philosophical or semi-philosophical content. We must never lose sight of the actual conditions prevailing among the Teutonic tribes of the days of Tacitus, or of the Anglo-Saxon migration to England. With their organization in army and *thing*, their castes, and their wealth of sagas, these tribes certainly were not savages. And yet they cannot be classed among the civilized peoples, enjoying settled conditions of life and possessing literary culture. They belong to that middle class to which Tylor has given the name of barbarians, though to its higher representatives. Notwithstanding von Ranke's weighty objections,[1] we do not hesitate to include them among this class. Every comparison with other peoples fails us here, the one that is open to the least objection being perhaps that which likens the *populi* and *civitates* of Tacitus and the Anglo-Saxon tribes of the fifth century to the Greeks of the Homeric age.

For the rich literature of the heroic saga, of the Anglo-Saxon and Norse monuments (*Beowulf* and the Edda), we have vindicated a genuine Teutonic kernel. It is, however, not possible to recognize in them products of the purely pagan period, and, besides, their contents were only to a limited extent religious in character. These writings contain a wealth of material in the form of old sagas and myths, which although

[1] *Weltgeschichte*, III, 41.

only indirectly connected with religion, — inasmuch as the literature has neither sprung from religious needs nor received a religious setting, — supply data of an inestimable value for the history of religion. Not until we reach the period of transition in the North, the tenth century, do we meet with a few songs, more especially *Völuspa*, that have a religious character.

It also deserves to be pointed out that in the whole course of our investigation not a single figure has been met with in which the pagan religious ideas can be said to have found a typical expression, or which exerted a dominant influence on the trend of religious thought, — no king, no priest, no prophet, no poet. For neither the scalds, whose adventures and poems captivate us, nor Saxo, who has preserved such a wealth of sagas, nor Snorri, who arranged and codified mythological traditions, can be regarded as such, and the great Norwegian kings, more especially Olaf Tryggvason, are those who introduced Christianity.

The spirit of paganism is still most clearly felt in the character of the ancient gods, such as has been described in Chapter 13. At various times we have noted the fact that numerous Teutonic peoples clung with great tenacity to a cult which had become interwoven with their life and traditions, and which was associated with their sacred places. When we ask what influence this religion exerted upon life in its various relations, we enter upon the domain of the history of morals.

What the Germans have called history of morals (*Sittengeschichte*) represents, however, not a sharply marked off, but a well-nigh boundless, field ; on the one hand it is closely related to the history of legal and political institutions (*Verfassungsgeschichte*), on the other to folklore. While the history of morals is distinct from both of these, it may yet not overlook the ethical significance of either constitutional and legal institutions or of popular customs. An inquiry into the social

relations existing between commanders and subordinates, freemen and slaves, man and wife, parents and children, falls no less within the province of the history of morals than does the investigation of customs at childbirth, at marriage and death, at festivals, and in connection with the various pursuits of life. What either public law or public opinion stigmatizes or punishes as wrong, what is esteemed or abhorred in certain circles at certain periods, the ideas and sentiments that govern the life of individuals, the ideals, motives, and moods, — all this furnishes material for the history of morals. Only he, therefore, should undertake to write this history who is able to make use of the sources for the history of a specific period, and who in addition possesses a faculty of nice perception and correct judgment, which will enable him to discover, to discriminate, and to group the data of which he stands in need.

It is at no time an easy task to deduce from words and actions either the motives and moods from which they proceed, or the general spiritual atmosphere from which they have sprung. It is equally difficult to sketch on the basis of a few isolated facts the moral atmosphere of a particular time. The *Sittengeschichte* of the extensive period — no less than a thousand years — which our treatment embraces has not as yet been written; but he who does undertake to write it will undoubtedly have occasion to deplore, in the case of numerous portions of his subject, the scantiness of the material at his command.

Much of what such a history would contain lies outside the scope of the present volume. We are not concerned with either the perpetuation of the antique or the introduction of the Christian morals, and yet Teutonic pagan customs have been so woven together with both of these that a sharp dividing line cannot possibly be drawn.

The question accordingly suggests itself: What influence did pagan belief exert on morality? or, rather, What religious significance attaches to morality among the ancient Teutons?

Tacitus is again the first author to be considered. From the remarks made above[1] on the subject of religion, the main characteristics of Teutonic morality may be deduced. It was there stated that "the air of mystery and the intimate connection with the life of the tribe" constituted fundamental traits of Teutonic religion. The feeling entertained by the ancient Teutons towards their gods partook far more of the nature of awe and fear than of intimacy and familiarity. It was not a joyous worship of nature. The gods were "unapproachable, dreaded," and the people "bowed their heads in silence before the indomitable power of these invisible and dread beings."[2] And yet these gods, by virtue of the auspices, were present in the popular assembly, and through the standards that were taken along from the forests accompanied the army into battle. Festivals were celebrated in their honor and those days were days of rejoicing (*laeti dies*), but withal it is evident that gods who demanded human offerings inspired terror rather than confidence. The gods are the tribal progenitors; there is no indication of the existence of a closer relationship between them and specific persons. Not that the life of the individual had become completely merged with that of the tribe; on the contrary, Tacitus takes pains to point out how strongly Teutonic institutions developed the feeling of personal honor. This is evidenced in his remarks both on the *comitatus*[3] and on marriage and on the purity of morals.[4] To emulate one another in bravery and to be faithful to their chief, — these are the highest virtues of the *comitatus* in both peace and war. The sexual purity of the Teutons is depicted in colors carefully chosen to bring out the contrast with the moral corruption of Rome. None of these personal virtues, neither bravery, nor fidelity, nor chastity, are, in the account of Tacitus, given a

[1] Page 102.
[2] Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, II, 330, 359.
[3] Chapters 13, 14. [4] Chapters 18, 19.

religious setting. Thus the gods belong solely to the cult, which was, to be sure, intimately connected with the political and social order of things. That the punishment inflicted upon criminals bore a sacred character, just as every breach of the peace was an offence against the gods, while not expressly stated in Chapter 12, may yet be inferred from it in connection with the remarks made in Chapter 7 and elsewhere concerning Teutonic law. The standard of morality held up by this law is strikingly high; while giving full weight to the fact that Tacitus ever has in mind the contrast with the depravities of Roman civilization, yet the epithets *turpe* and *infame*[1] applied to treason, faithlessness, base crimes, unnatural vices, etc., cannot but testify to the purity of ancient Teutonic morals, however boisterous and violent may have been their revels over their cups and at gambling.

As in the days of Tacitus, so for the centuries that follow, the moral functions of the gods are identical with their position as guardians and defenders of *thing* and host. In so far as we are actually acquainted with the part they play in Teutonic law and in the cult, we find the gods punishing those who transgress against them, or who violate the sacred peace, *i.e.* the regular order of legal procedure or of the military camp. This forms the whole extent of their moral significance. They have in no sense become the embodiment of certain moral qualities or ideals. By way of exception, popular imagination has now and then invested them with a special form, Wodan being, for example, thought of as a rider; but an individualized character is borne only by a few, in the poetic mythology of the Edda. Even the number of their functions is extremely limited as compared with the gods of the more highly developed mythologies, Wodan-Odhin again being the only one whose connections, as god of the storm, of the dead, of war, of poetry, of magic, and of agriculture, are somewhat varied, although not

[1] "Shameful" and "infamous."

all of these are, of course, equally original. The Teutonic gods are in no way the expression of lofty ideas or sentiments, be they æsthetical or ethical, such as would make the servant of the gods, at the sight of their images or at the thought of their deeds, feel himself in their presence imbued with new moral strength. The myths that are recounted of them either stand on the plane of phenomena of nature or have undergone free poetical elaboration; no moral standards are applied to the gods. Those Scandinavian myths that would seem to controvert this statement can, as we have seen in our treatment of the myths of the Vanir war and the world-drama, not be accounted original.

Of greater importance than the god-myths, when we wish to inquire into the moral ideals embodied in living personalities, are the heroic sagas. No one has treated this subject with such delicate feeling and exquisite taste as Uhland, who describes in detail the chief types that the heroic saga depicts: the kings, the masters, the heroes, the comrades, the faithless, and the women.[1] According to Uhland, in both the principal modes of Teutonic life, among those settled in fixed habitations, and those who roam in enterprises on land and sea, the main bond of union and the leading virtue is fidelity: "in it we discern the power that animates and sustains Teutonic life."[2] We meet it in all the varied relations of life; it knits the closest ties and inspires also the most implacable vengefulness. Here lies the secret of those two wonderful creations of medieval epic poetry: Hagen, at once the most faithful and the most faithless; Kriemhilt, before Siegfried's death the most tender wife, but after his death a very she-devil towards her enemies.

[1] See particularly the section entitled "Das Ethische" of his masterly study on the *Heldensage* in the first volume of his collected works (I, 211–347). The seventh volume of his works also treats of the Norse and German heroic saga. Of more recent works, the book of W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance* (1897), contains thoughtful observations on this phase of the subject.

[2] *Schriften*, VII, 555.

Much as the various heroic sagas differ from one another, this motif constantly recurs, now in the form of a glorification of fidelity, as in the Gothic Amelungen Saga, and again in that of a tragedy of infidelity, as in the Frankish-Burgundian Nibelungen Saga. Uhland is fully aware of the fact that these sagas have assimilated numerous new elements traceable to various centuries, and that they are even to some extent under the influence of the medieval conceptions of chivalry and courtly love (*Minne*), but this one fundamental trait, he holds, is nevertheless old, original, and common to all Teutons, meeting us, as it does, even in the picture drawn by Tacitus. "Epic poetry has its roots in the sum-total of the life and customs of the people."

While it is to be acknowledged without reservation that the centuries in which the development of the epic poems that deal with the heroic saga lies have left their impress on the contents, the persons, the conceptions, and sentiments of these poems, there is yet no doubt that the characters of these sagas represent figures from the stormy days of the times of the migrations and of the Viking period, characters full of noble simplicity, Teutons with all their characteristic traits of faithfulness, bravery, roughness, and vengefulness. These are the very respects in which the characters of the heroic lays of the Norse Edda, of *Beowulf*, and the medieval German epics agree, — characters that are otherwise so utterly different because they lie so far apart in space and time. Perhaps the judgment above passed on the characters of *Beowulf*, that they were mere abstract types, was after all somewhat hasty: in any case they are not the result of conscious reflection, but are living persons, even though this life, on account of the massive forms into which it is cast, tends to assume a certain uniformity. This is not the case with either the Norse or German forms of the heroic saga, especially not in the latter, where the more tender and delicate shades of character have received their just due.

What strikes us in all these characters is their perfect assurance and firmness as regards duty and right. They lived in an age of tumult in which all bonds seemed to be severed. Distant expeditions, and the rapidity with which kingdom after kingdom fell, combined to make people feel that all outward support was failing them. And yet in all this uncertainty no state of moral anarchy prevails. Men know what to do: their duty lies before them, clear and simple, and the moral order is not subverted. This morality is not hallowed by religion: it would be a very difficult task indeed to collect from the heroic saga examples of pagan Teutonic piety. But the material that represents the moral side is all the richer. The contrast that we have just indicated pervades Teutonic heroic poetry in its entirety. In the midst of the storms that upheave all else, man remains true to his lord, to his word, to his vengeance, to all that duty prescribes. Not a trace of inward struggle is to be found. It is this very trait in the characters of Hagen and Kriemhilt that affects us most powerfully, — that they commit the horrible and inhuman with as ready a heart and hand as the noble and great.

A second thought also, the realization that all things are transient and uncertain, has left its imprint on all the heroic poetry, and dominates, in fact, the whole mood of the period of the migrations and of the Vikings. The motifs that we meet in the Teutonic heroic poetry are deeply tragic; witness the Gothic Ermanaric Saga, or the Lombardian saga of Alboin, the bold and brave king, — celebrated in epic songs that may still be clearly recognized in the Latin prose of Paulus Diaconus,[1] — who falls a victim to the vengeance of his wife. To quote the remark of the old Vandal — a remark exemplified by the subsequent history of his own people — "no human structure stands firm, nothing existing has its future assured, nothing is

[1] Paulus Diaconus, I, 24; II, 28.

impossible in the future."[1] Accordingly, the medieval epic of the Nibelungen never wearies of enforcing the truth that sorrow follows joy, a thought in which we may recognize the echo of the dominant mood of an entire period.

This perception of the transient and uncertain character of all things, in which nothing is certain but death, from which there is no escape, but which, on the other hand, also does not strike until the appointed day has dawned, — this fatalism is characteristic of the Norse Vikings as well as of the peoples of the migrations. Of the belief in fate, the *Heliand*[2] and Anglo-Saxon literature[3] still show distinct traces; Norse literature[4] is full of it. All is predestined and no one escapes his fate. This mood has little or no connection with piety: it is a blind fate to which men bow in submission. But people live on in this uncertainty, not with a feeling of dull and stolid resignation, but with bold and undaunted hearts. Grimm[5] has very aptly called this "sorgenfreier Fatalismus."[6] If the warrior knows that he is to fall in battle, then let him fight all the more bravely, for he has no reason to spare himself. If he knows that he will come out unscathed, then too let him fight a good battle: what is most to be feared, is to be struck down in flight.[7] As it is impossible to know which of the two alternatives will happen, one acts in accordance with the conclusions that will fit either case. To die laughing, when the hour of death has struck, as does Ragnar Lodbrok in *Krákumál;* or dauntless, like the Jomsvikings, who gloriously without semblance of fear fall under the sword of Thorkel,[8] — that is what behooves men. Norse literature abounds in examples of this kind, and we may safely regard them as correctly depicting the

1 Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico*, I, 22.
2 See above p. 131.
3 See above p. 155.
4 Numerous illustrative passages are cited by Maurer, BNS. II, 162–165.
5 DM.[4], *Vorrede*, XLI.
6 "A fatalism that is free from care."
7 *Sverrissaga*, Chapter 47.
8 *Jómsvíkingasaga*, Chapter 47.

mood of the Teutons in the centuries covered by their expeditions on water and on land. Glory is more than life:

> We have gotten a good report though we die to-day or to-morrow. No man can live over the evening when the word of the Norns has gone forth.[1]

Thirst for glory and absolute reliance upon one's own strength do not constitute a religious mood. At the same time, it would appear that too much has been made of the so-called scepticism of Norsemen in the Viking period. We have in mind more particularly Felix Dahn, who defended his somewhat ostentatious novel, *Sind Götter?*[2] by collecting a dozen examples of scepticism from Norse literature.[3] While in the tenth century there doubtless were many persons who no longer sacrificed, or believed in Odhin, but who, putting their trust in their own strong arm, "believed in themselves," this does not prove the existence of a speculative scepticism. Such unbelief has unquestionably existed in every period, and it is certainly also not an unusual phenomenon to find savage warriors relying upon their own might rather than upon the gods. As opposed to this, we also possess from Vikings expressions of trust in Thor, who lends aid to warriors. On the whole, however, the influence that the belief of the Vikings in their gods exerted on their conduct and mental attitude cannot have been great. Many were godless, and this very word (*godhlauss*) is applied to several, though without the implication of free thinking that we ordinarily associate with the word.

An abundance of data bearing on morals may be gathered from Saxo, who, although a Christian and writing in Latin, has yet preserved, as has repeatedly been pointed out, a large amount of genuine ancient material, of Norse as well as of Danish origin. The ideals of bravery and magnanimity that characterize the heroes, the chastity of the women, the old-

[1] *Hamdhismál*, 31 (CPB. I, 59). [2] "Do gods exist?"

[3] *Skepticismus und Götterleugnung im nordgermanischen Heidenthum* (*Bausteine*, I, 133–135). Compare also Finnur Jónsson, *Litteratur Historie*, I, 30 ff.

fashioned aversion of Starkad towards the luxuries and refinements of life, the numerous proverbs — especially in the speeches of Ericus Disertus,[1] — some of which also occur elsewhere in Norse form, while the others as well reflect, to a large extent, wisdom that had long been current, — all this breathes the spirit of Teutonic antiquity. In passing, we may point out that this wisdom already shows a predilection for the pointed gnomic form, which is so efficient an aid to the memory. Its content is, in the main, the same as that of the gnomic wisdom of other ages, colored by the warlike character of the times, full of disdain for cowards and fools, and highly extolling the noble and the free above the slaves ("A slave is a false friend," "Noble fathers have noble sons"). Images borrowed from the ordinary surroundings of life are of common occurrence ("Sailing is quicker than rowing," "When we see a wolf's ear we know he is not far off").[2] One feature deserves particular attention, viz. the esteem in which truthfulness was held. Saxo tells us that "the illustrious men of old thought lying most dishonorable,"[3] with which another statement is to be contrasted: "We who do not account lying and deceiving as wicked and despicable."[4] Similarly, great importance is attached to the fact that Amleth (Hamlet), in all the cunning measures which he devises and executes to elude danger and to avenge the murder of his father, yet does not once resort to lies.[5] This last example is the more important, because it shows us that truthfulness did not by any means preclude everything that we are accustomed to regard as deceit. If truth was only adhered to from an external and formal point of view and the feeling of personal honor thereby preserved, there was felt to be no objection against relying upon the

[1] "Eric the Speech-wise."

[2] A list is given in the Introduction by York Powell to Elton's translation of *The First Nine Books of Saxo Grammaticus* (1894), pp. lxxxv–lxxxix. A list of Old Norse proverbs may be found in the *Icelandic Prose Reader* (1879), pp. 259–264.

[3] IV, 167.

[4] IV, 179.

[5] III, 50.

deceit contained in an equivocal word, or a dissembling mien, by which the enemy was misled. Such shrewdness was viewed as redounding to a man's honor and glory rather than to his shame. Keeping this distinction in mind, it will be seen that the notorious faithlessness with which so many medieval writers charge the Norsemen is not at all incompatible with their love of truth. With great subtleness and acumen, they made use, in the terms of a treaty, of ambiguous expressions: their honor thus remained unstained, their word unbroken.[1] The liar and the traitor, on the other hand, are to be despised. To the very last days of paganism this view continues to prevail: in the period of deep moral degeneracy that precedes the end of the world, perjury is, next to murder, accounted the greatest crime.[2]

Like Saxo, the poetic Edda furnishes only a few disjointed utterances on the subject of morals. These have been combined in several collections of proverbs, most notably in *Hávamál*. Here again morality has little of the religious character,[3] even though we should put these wise saws in the mouth of Odhin, as the title (*Hávamál*, the sayings of Hár, the high one) might seem to demand. But the mythical strophes, 13 and 14, in which Odhin is introduced as speaker, are probably an interpolation, and the fiction that the god is the speaker is likewise foreign to the proverbs of the first part of the poem.[4] In the fourth part, finally, which according to Müllenhoff forms the nucleus of the entire poem, we may suppose the minstrel Loddfafnir, and not Odhin, to be the speaker. In any case, apart from the question whether the imputing of proverbs and gnomic poems to Odhin may not, in view of his character as god of the runes, be more or less ancient and original, the content of this moralizing certainly does not bear a religious

[1] See Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, II (*Vikingetogene*), 354 ff.

[2] *Völuspa*, 26, 39; compare also *Sigrdrifumál*, 23. [3] See above, p. 204.

[4] On *Hávamál* see Müllenhoff, DA. V, 250–288, and Finnur Jónsson, *Litteratur Historie*, I, 223–244, where Müllenhoff's views are attacked.

stamp. Its horizon does not extend beyond the ordinary relations of life and of intercourse between men. It counsels rather than commands, and is intent solely upon the useful and advantageous. Experience and understanding teach the need of prudence and wisdom: be on your guard, therefore, against injuring yourself by incautious speech or immoderate drink; beware of the false friend, of the fool, of the wife of another; meet the man whom you distrust with a friendly smile, paying him like with like. On what behooves the guest, on friendship, on the advantages of silence, on distrust which is ever on its guard, but also on prudent judgment, which reflects that no man is so good as to have no faults, and no man so bad as to be good for nothing, — on these and similar subjects these verses contain pointed and at times striking observations. Old age is esteemed, the gray hair of the minstrel held in honor, for the aged man often utters words of wisdom, — a feeling which, to judge from the sagas, was by no means general in the North: childish old age, bringing in its train spitefulness and peevishness, is at the most an object of pity, at times even the butt of mockery.[1] These maxims do not, of course, furnish us with a connected picture of Norse life; the virtue that is here most emphasized is not bravery, which is, to be sure, presupposed, but wisdom in the sense of prudence, caution, distrust. The horizon is limited to earthly things: under all circumstances, it is better to live than to be dead. After death only fame still lives on: the good name which a man has acquired does not perish with him.

We find the same kind of wisdom inculcated in still other passages, more especially in the strophes (22–37) that are joined in the form of an appendix to *Sigrdrífumál*. Of these maxims, eleven are numbered, four or five intervening ones being unnumbered. They evidently did not originally belong in this connection: in the mouth of the Walkyrie, to whom

[1] See K. Kålund, *Sitte*, PG.[2], III, 424.

they are assigned, they seem most inappropriate. The same maxims, in the main, are also found in the Vǫlsunga Saga, Chapter 21. Here, too, weight is attached to "enduring fame," and the conception prevails that not only courage but also wisdom behooves the hero, — the wisdom through which he shuns the friendship of the man whose father he has slain, for vengeance never slumbers. Among the duties that are prescribed, the ninth deserves mention: the man who is found lying dead must be buried. It is extremely doubtful, however, whether this duty really has the mythical basis that the wolf who threatens to devour the sun feeds on the flesh of unburied corpses.[1]

The relations of life in whose midst these proverbs place us are very simple. Public and political life play an unimportant rôle. The *thing* is referred to now and then. In the way of combat, only private feuds and the vengeance of families or individuals are mentioned. The circumstances and reflections of a man who knocks at a door as a stranger, not knowing what his welcome will be; who must not allow the way — frequently a long one — which leads to the house of his friend to become overgrown with grass; who is aware that small gifts at times knit bonds of friendship between men, and that moderate wisdom gladdens the heart more than excess of knowledge; who knows how to shun the malevolent woman seated by the roadside, and the deceitfully smiling enemy; who remembers that he must rise early if he would secure booty and see his work well done, — in short, matters which concern the outward circumstances of life have here in the main been scrutinized with a keen eye, and expressed in terse and pointed form. But to the inner depths of the truly personal life this wisdom does not penetrate; character and disposition are not considered, even virtues are scarcely mentioned: for the most part, we have only rules of practical conduct. Even the realization

[1] *Vǫluspa*, 41.

that life is transient has not cast over these precepts the soft elegiac haze which we so frequently find in the epical heroic saga. In fact, in this whole gnomic wisdom there is little or nothing that indicates mood, or testifies to depth of feeling.

Fortunately this picture is supplemented, and invested with life and color, by the characters and scenes found in the Norse sagas, although here too the history of morals has to deal less with feelings and moods than with established customs and with actions. For, as was pointed out above,[1] the keen sense for right and honor, for fidelity and vengeance, forms the keynote of these stories, and constitutes the ever-recurring motif in the action. How little this period was given to sentimentality may be seen from the relations of the sexes: love before marriage is as rare as fidelity after marriage is general.[2] Not only Bergthora, who refuses to be rescued from the house in which her husband and children are to be burnt, furnishes an example of this faithfulness, but even Signy, in the Vǫlsunga Saga, who has from the outset hated her husband Siggeir, and has been unfaithful to him in various ways, still considers it her duty to die with him, now that her vengeance on him has been executed. Nor is it likely that our judgment concerning the absence of such a world of feeling as animates, for example, modern lyrical poetry would be modified, in case we still possessed the specimens of erotic poetry in which the scald Thormodhr sang the praises of his beloved and on account of which he even received the surname Kolbrunarskald. To Norwegians and Icelanders sentiment was doubtless as foreign as the contemplation of problems dealing with life and death, that "pale cast of thought" which hinders manly doing and daring. Little developed as the relations of life were, the spirit remained fixed upon the outward world, formulated no theories, and made no explorations in the unknown regions of the human mind. The yearning of the human spirit for the

[1] Pages 204 ff.

[2] See K. Kålund, *Sitte*, PG.[2], III, 421.

vast, the boundless, and the mysterious, fed in the case of these Norsemen by narratives of adventure in distant parts, and by active participation in feuds at home, was in large part satisfied by voyages on sea and by expeditions to foreign lands. Down to the very last days of paganism, the intellectual horizon remained narrow and circumscribed. Even among the Scandinavians of the tenth century, it is ever the more solid virtues that we hear extolled, qualified only by wisdom in the sense of shrewdness. That this double-faced shrewdness was incompatible with truth and good faith was never realized by them; for all that, life, though concerned with the external world, did not become superficial. On the contrary, the characters show great firmness and concentrated power. Men do not fall short of the frequently difficult tasks that life imposes. They bravely confront death, and dauntlessly face danger, adversity, and foe alike.

These moral conditions likewise explain why the conversion to Christianity took place with so relatively few conflicts. Life proper was little interfered with: it remained approximately the same after as before the conversion. Morality possessing in the last period of Scandinavian paganism in so limited degree the consecration of religion, the Christianization, while abolishing the heathen gods and the heathen cult, did not to any considerable extent come into collision with existing usages, a few pagan customs alone, which were too much at variance with Christian precepts, being proscribed. When Njal at his death says, "Put your faith in God, and believe that he is so merciful that he will not let us burn both in this world and the next,"[1] he is, of course, speaking as a Christian, but in reality this hardly affects the spirit of the story as a whole. Christianity was not preached to the Norsemen as a new moral ideal. Hence the continuous, unbroken character of the history of the Scandinavian peoples. The Christianization did not usher in

[1] Dasent, *The Story of Burnt Njal*, Chapter 128.

a new period. Not until after the lapse of a great number of years did it become evident that Christianity was a leaven in the moral life of the human race.

It is a fruitless task to attempt to trace the exact influence of Teutonic paganism on the development of the human race. Such an influence must everywhere be assumed in the Teutonic world, both in Europe and America, *i.e.*, in three-fourths of the civilized world, but it can nowhere be definitely pointed out, in folklore no more than in legal observances, in which latter it is certainly not absent. Teutonic paganism has not bequeathed us a doctrine, a poem, a book, or an institution that has put its stamp on humanity for all time to come; it has given us no personality that has become a typical figure for all future generations. However numerous the links that connect us in manners, customs, and laws with ancient Teutonic life, our civilization none the less remains classical and Christian in origin. However typical the figures of Beowulf, Siegfried, and Kriemhilt may be, and with however living a personality they may have been invested anew at the hand of modern poetry, it can in no wise be maintained that from them a mighty current of pagan Teutonic culture has passed into the life of the human race.

While no direct connection can accordingly be shown to exist between Teutonic paganism and the later extensive development of religion and civilization amongst the peoples of the Teutonic group, the ancient religion we have sought to depict shows numerous traces of that strength of character and serious cast of mind through which the Teutonic nations have won and maintained their paramount place in history. Regarded in this light, the growth of the pagan centuries bears ample testimony to the fruitfulness of the soil from which it sprang.

NOTE

The bibliography, in its main outlines, is arranged according to the sequence of the chapters of the book. It does not aim to give an exhaustive list of either historical or literary works : only the prominent books in these subjects are mentioned. The comprehensive treatment of the history of Teutonic mythology in Chapter 2 furthermore relieves us of the necessity of here citing those older investigations that are at the present day of no real value to the student. A few monographs also, dealing with more special subjects, and cited occasionally in the footnotes, are not again entered here.

Aside from omissions, certain repetitions have to be accounted for : it was deemed advisable to give not only a list of general works, but also to refer again to such portions of them as were of permanent value for the study of the special subjects. Thus, in giving the literature of the pantheon, the classical portions from the general works on mythology are again referred to.

As a guide to students some remarks on the value of the books in question have been added. The literature is arranged with regard to chronology and to affinity of treatment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATIONS

Aside from those that are self-explanatory, the following abbreviations have been employed in text and bibliography.

AfdA . . . Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum.
AfnF . . . Arkiv for nordisk Filologi.
AfnO . . . Aarböger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie.
AfsPh . . . Archiv für slavische Philologie.
AG . . . . Acta Germanica.
AMA . . . Abhandlungen der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (München).
AZfG . . . Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Geschichte.
CPB . . . Corpus Poeticum Boreale, edited by G. Vigfússon and F. York Powell, Oxford, 1883.
DA . . . Deutsche Altertumskunde.
DM . . . Deutsche Mythologie.
EuG . . . Ersch und Gruber, Allgemeine Encyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste.
GddS . . . Jacob Grimm, Geschichte der deutschen Sprache, 2. Auflage, Leipzig, 1853.
GddV . . . Geschichtschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit.
GGA . . . Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen.
GHds . . . B. Symons, Germanische Heldensage, in PG.², III, 606–734.
GM . . . Germanische Mythologie.
HD . . . Saxo Grammaticus, Historia Danica.
MG . . . Monumenta Germaniæ Historica.
MPSG . . Migne, Patrologia Series Græca.
MPSL . . Migne, Patrologia Series Latina.
NTfO . . . Nordisk Tidskrift for Oldkyndighed.
PBB . . . Paul und Braune's Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur.
PG . . . . Paul's Grundriss der germanischen Philologie.
QuF . . . Quellen und Forschungen.
RC . . . . Revue Celtique.
SBA . . . Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin.

SMA . . . Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (München).
SWA . . . Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Wien).
TvnTeL . . Tijdschrift voor nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkunde.
TT . . . Theologisch Tijdschrift.
VAA . . . Verhandelingen der Akademie te Amsterdam.
VMAA . . Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Akademie te Amsterdam.
ZfdA . . . Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum.
ZfdPh . . . Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie.
ZfV . . . Zeitschrift für Volkskunde.
ZfVuS . . Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft.
ZSS . . . Zeitschrift der Savigny Stiftung.

I. HISTORY OF TEUTONIC MYTHOLOGY

Survey of Methods and Results — Lives of Prominent Scholars — General Works on Teutonic Antiquity and Mythology — Periodicals

(*a*) *Methods and Results — Biographies*

Raumer, R. von. — Geschichte der germanischen Philologie. Geschichte der Wissenschaften in Deutschland, Bd. IX. (München, 1870.)

Paul, H. — Geschichte der germanischen Philologie in Paul's Grundriss der germanischen Philologie[2], I, 9–158. (Strassburg, 1901.)

Grimm, Jacob. — Kleinere Schriften. (8 vols., Berlin, 1864–1890.)

Grimm, Wilhelm. — Kleinere Schriften. Herausgegeben von G. Hinrichs. (4 vols., Berlin, 1881–1887.)

Petersen, N. M. — Samlede Afhandlinger. (4 vols., Kopenhagen, 1870–1874.)

Brief surveys in:

Meyer, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 1–10. (Berlin, 1891.)

Golther, W. — Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie, pp. 1–54. (Leipzig, 1895.)

Symons, B. — De ontwikkelingsgang der germaansche mythologie. (Groningen, 1892.)

For the biographies of the more prominent scholars the articles in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* under such heads as J. Grimm, W. Grimm, Mannhardt, Müllenhoff, Uhland, etc., should be consulted. Of the two greatest scholars in this field of research we also possess special biographies:

SCHERER, W. — Jacob Grimm. (2d ed., Berlin, 1885.)
—— Karl Müllenhoff. (Berlin, 1896.)

(*b*) *General Works on Teutonic Mythology and Archæology*

Only the more valuable works are mentioned here; critical estimates will be found in Chapter 2.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie. (1st ed., in 2 vols., 1835; 2d ed., with an Introduction, 1844; 3d ed., unchanged; 4th ed., in 3 vols., "mit Nachträgen aus Grimm's Nachlass. Herausgegeben von E. H. Meyer," 1875–1878.)

MÜLLER, W. — Geschichte und System der altdeutschen Religion. (Göttingen, 1844.)

WOLF, J. W. — Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie. (I, 1852; II, 1857.)

—— Die deutsche Götterlehre. (Göttingen, 1852; 2d ed., 1874.)

SIMROCK, KARL. — Handbuch der deutschen Mythologie, mit Einschluss der nordischen. (Bonn, 1853; 6th ed., 1887.)

SCHWARTZ, F. L. W. — Der Ursprung der Mythologie, dargelegt an griechischer und deutscher Sage. (Berlin, 1860.)

—— Die poetischen Naturanschauungen der Griechen, Römer, und Deutschen in ihrer Beziehung zur Mythologie der Urzeit. (Berlin; I, 1864; II, 1879.)

RYDBERG, V. — Undersökningar i germanisk Mythologi. (I, 1886; II, 1889.)

Of Vol. I an English translation by R. B. Anderson has appeared, under the title *Teutonic Mythology*, London, 1889.

MANNHARDT, W. — Germanische Mythen. Forschungen. (Berlin, 1858.)

—— Die Götterwelt der deutschen und nordischen Völker. (Berlin, 1860.)

—— Wald- und Feldkulte. I. Der Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme. (Berlin, 1875.) II. Antike Wald- und

Feldkulte aus nordeuropäischen Überlieferungen erläutert. (Berlin, 1877.)

MANNHARDT, W. — Mythologische Forschungen aus dem Nachlass, mit Vorreden von K. Müllenhoff und W. Scherer. QuF. LI, 1884.

GRUNDTVIG, N. F. S. — Nordens Mythologi eller Sindbilled-Sprog historisk-poetisk Udviklet og Oplyst. (Kopenhagen, 1832.)

KEYSER, R. — Nordmændenes Religionsforfatning i Hedendomen. (Christiania, 1847.)

MUNCH, P. A. — Nordmændenes ældste Gude- og Heltesagn. (Christiania, 1854; a new edition by Kjær appeared in 1880.)

PETERSEN, N. M. — Nordisk Mythologi. (Kopenhagen, 1849; 2d ed., 1863.)

HEIBERG, J. L. — Nordisk Mythologie udg. af Chr. Winther. (Kopenhagen, 1862.)

JESSEN, E. — Nordisk Gudelære. (Kopenhagen, 1867.)

PETERSEN, H. — Om Nordboernes Gudedyrkelse og Gudetro i Hedenold. (Kopenhagen, 1876.)

Translated into German by Minna Riess, with an Appendix by E. Jessen, under the title, "Über den Gottesdienst und den Götterglauben des Nordens während der Heidenzeit," Gardelegen, 1882.

BUGGE, S. — Studien über die Entstehung der nordischen Götter- und Heldensagen, deutsch von O. Brenner. (München, 1889.)

VODSKOV, H. S. — Sjæledyrkelse og Naturdyrkelse, Vol. I. (Kopenhagen, 1897.)

The Introduction, which appeared as early as 1890, is important from the point of view of methodology.

THORPE, B. — Northern Mythology. (3 vols., London, 1851–1852.)

KAUFFMANN, F. — Deutsche Mythologie. Sammlung Göschen. No. 15. (Stuttgart, 1890; 2d ed., 1893.)

A very brief sketch.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie. (Berlin, 1891.)

Chapter 3, §§ 21–88, gives the most detailed account of the sources.

GOLTHER, W. — Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie. (Leipzig, 1895.)

GUMMERE, F. B. — Germanic Origins. (New York, 1892.)

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde. (Berlin; I, 1870; II, 1887; III, 1892; IV, 1900; V, 1, 1883; V, 2, 1891.)

Vols. I–III are especially important for the study of ethnography; Vol. IV contains a commentary on the *Germania* of Tacitus; Vol. V deals more particularly with the Edda.

PAUL, H. — Grundriss der germanischen Philologie. Herausgegeben von H. Paul. (1st ed., I, II, 1, 2, Strassburg, 1891–1893; 2d ed., 3 vols., 1898 ff.)

Gives an encyclopædic survey, by different scholars, of the various departments of Teutonic philology. The two titles that follow constitute part of this work.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 230–406.

SYMONS, B. — Heldensage. PG.², III, 606–734.

(*c*) *Periodicals*

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to draw a line of demarcation between the periodicals that bear on Teutonic mythology and those of a purely historical, archæological, or philological character. Nor are all periodicals that occasionally publish articles on mythology enumerated here, inasmuch as the list, more particularly in view of the large number of collections of folklore in different parts of Germany and England, could scarcely be made complete. A bare reference to the publications of the *Folklore Society*, the *Viking Club*, and similar societies must accordingly suffice. The same remark applies to French periodicals and collections, such as *Mélusine* and others. The proceedings of academies (*Sitzungsberichte*, *Abhandlungen*) as well as works appearing in such series as the *Germanistische Abhandlungen* and *Quellen und Forschungen* will, however, be cited in their proper places.

Bragur. Ein litterarisches Magazin der deutschen und nordischen Vorzeit. Herausgegeben von Gräter unter Mitwirkung von Böck, Häslein, und Nyerup. (8 vols., 1791–1812.)

Of historical interest as the first German magazine devoted to Teutonic mythology.

Neues Jahrbuch der Berliner Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache und Alterthumskunde. Herausgegeben von F. H. von der Hagen. (10 vols., 1835–1853.)

Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde. Herausgegeben von J. W. Wolf. (4 vols., 1853–1859.)

Vol. IV edited by W. Mannhardt.

Nordalbingische Studien. Neues Archiv der Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Geschichte. (6 vols., Kiel, 1844–1854.)

Valuable on account of contributions by K. Müllenhoff.

Orient und Occident, insbesondere in ihren gegenseitigen Beziehungen. Forschungen und Mittheilungen. Herausgegeben von Theodor Benfey. (3 vols., 1862–1864.)

Especially valuable for the migration of tales.

Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum. Edited successively by M. Haupt, K. Müllenhoff, W. Scherer, E. Steinmeyer, E. Schroeder, G. Roethe. (Leipzig and Berlin, 1841 ff.)

The chief organ of the school of Lachmann; rich in valuable articles, containing, for example, the more important essays of K. Müllenhoff.

Germania. Vierteljahrschrift für deutsche Altertumskunde. Edited successively by F. Pfeiffer, K. Bartsch, O. Behaghel. (37 vols., Stuttgart and Wien, 1856–1892.)

Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie. Edited successively by E. Höpfner, J. Zacher, H. Gering, F. Kauffmann. (Halle, 1868 ff.)

Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur. Founded by H. Paul und W. Braune; now edited by E. Sievers. (Halle, 1874 ff.)

The chief organ of the "Junggrammatiker"; occasionally publishes contributions to the study of mythology.

Jahresbericht über die Erscheinungen auf dem Gebiete der germanischen Philologie. Herausgegeben von der Gesellschaft für deutsche Philologie in Berlin. (1879 ff.)

Zeitschrift für Volkskunde. Herausgegeben von E. Veckenstedt. (4 vols., 1889–1892.)

Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde. Neue Folge der Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft von Lazarus und Steinthal. Herausgegeben von K. Weinhold. (1891 ff.)

Compare Section VII, Animism and Folklore.

Aarböger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie. Udgivne af der Kgl. Nordiske Oldskrift Selskab. (1866 ff.)

The annual transactions (*Aarsberetninger*) of the same society have appeared since 1837.

Arkiv for nordisk Filologi. (Lund, 1883 ff.)

Contains important articles by Scandinavian scholars, such as Bugge, Wimmer, Noreen, Axel Olrik, G. Storm, etc.

II. ARCHÆOLOGY

Worm, Ole. — Monumenta Danica. (Hafniæ, 1643.)

Ledetraad til nordisk Oldkyndighed. (Kopenhagen, 1836.)

A brief treatise, by N. M. Petersen and C. J. Thomsen, published by the Nordiske Oldskrift Selskab. The description of the objects is by Thomsen, who here first enunciates the theory of the three ages.

Worsaae, J. J. A. — Danmarks Oldtid. (Kopenhagen, 1843.)

—— Nordens Forhistorie. (Kopenhagen, 1881.)

Müller, Sophus. — Nordische Altertumskunde. Übersetzt von O. L. Jiriczek. (2 vols., Strassburg, 1896–1898.)

Montelius, O. — The Civilisation of Sweden in Heathen Times. From the Swedish by F. H. Woods. (London, 1888.)

Much, M. — Die Kupferzeit in Europa. (2d ed., Jena, 1893.)

Lindenschmit, L. — Handbuch der deutschen Altertumskunde, Bd. I. (Braunschweig, 1880–1889.)

The first volume deals with the monuments of the Merovingian period. The work is an attempt to overthrow the archæological system evolved by Danish scholars. An unfavorable, but just, review by K. Müllenhoff will be found in AfdA. VII, 209–228.

Stephens, G. — The Old-Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England. (London, 1866–1867.)

Evans, J. — Ancient Bronze Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments of Great Britain and Ireland. (London, 1881.)

Henning, R. — Die deutschen Runendenkmäler. (Strassburg, 1889.)

Meyer, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 86–88.

Contains a brief survey of Teutonic archæology.

Schrader, O. — Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte. (2d ed., Jena, 1890.)

Schrader's conclusions are assailed by von Bradke in the work cited below.

Bradke, P. von. — Über Methode und Ergebnisse der arischen (indogermanischen) Altertumswissenschaft. (Giessen, 1890.)

SCHMIDT, J. — Die Urheimath der Indogermanen und das europäische Zahlsystem. ABA. II, 1890.

JHERING, R. VON. — Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer. (Leipzig, 1894.)

An English translation by A. Drucker, under the title *The Evolution of the Aryan*, appeared in New York, 1897.

HEHN, V. — Kulturpflanzen und Hausthiere in ihrem Übergang aus Asien nach Griechenland und Italien sowie in das übrige Europa. (6th ed., Berlin, 1894.)

Still of great value; treats the material, as the title indicates, from a special point of view. An English translation, under the title *Cultivated Plants and Domestic Animals in their Migration from Asia to Europe*, appeared in London, 1891.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Geschichte der deutschen Sprache. (2 vols., Leipzig, 1848.)

Grundriss der germanischen Philologie. Herausgegeben von H. Paul. Sections entitled "Sprachgeschichte," I, 283–1537.

III. ETHNOGRAPHY

(*a*) *Sources*

Language, in its structure and history, its stock of words, more especially of proper names, constitutes the chief source of our knowledge of the distribution and reciprocal relations of the various tribes. This is supplemented by the data furnished by ancient historians and geographers.

Pytheas of Massilia (± 330 B.C.): A. Schmekel, *Pytheæ Massiliensis quæ supersunt fragmenta.* (Merseburg, 1848.) (See the detailed discussion by Müllenhoff, in DA. I.)

Other works on geography that should be mentioned are:

Eratosthenes; Strabo; Ptolemæus; *Tabula Peutingeriana* (the original probably from the third century A.D.); Julius Honorius; *Codex Veronensis* (from the fourth century A.D.); *Cosmographus Ravennas* (from the seventh century A.D.).

Of literary sources Tacitus alone deserves special mention. The tribal sagas might also be classed as sources, but they require close critical scrutiny. They differ greatly in character, some being mere lists of names, such as the Anglo-Saxon genealogical tables, others more or less elaborate accounts of tribal origins or of ancient expeditions, that have received a literary setting.

(*b*) *Proper Names and Word-Stock*

OBERMÜLLER, W. — Deutsch-Keltisches Wörterbuch. (Leipzig, 1866–1872.)

Untrustworthy on account of its fantastic comparisons of German proper names with those of Western Asia, Northern Africa, etc.

FÖRSTEMANN, E. — Altdeutsches Namenbuch. I. Personennamen (1st ed., 1854; 2d ed., 1900 ff.). II. Ortsnamen (1st ed., 1856–1859; 2d ed., 1872).

The standard work on the subject.

EGLI, J. J. — Geschichte der geographischen Namenkunde. (2d ed., Leipzig, 1893.)

Gives a survey of the literature up to the year 1885.

BEHM, E. — Geographisches Jahrbuch. (Gotha, 1866 ff.)

Bibliographical.

PETERSEN, N. M. — Om danske og norske Stedenavnes Oprindsele og Forklaring. NTfO. II, 1833.

Treats Danish and Norwegian names of cities.

GLÜCK, C. W. — Die bei Cæsar vorkommenden keltischen Namen. (München, 1857.)

HOLDER, A. — Altceltischer Sprachschatz. (Leipzig, 1891 ff.)

An important work, which is still in progress.

(*c*) *Ancient Geographers*

Among the smaller contributions to our knowledge of ancient geography the following deserve special mention:

HOFF, L. — Die Kenntnis Germaniens im Altertum. (Leipzig, 1890.)

HOLZ, G. — Über die germanische Völkertafel des Ptolemæus. Beiträge zur deutschen Altertumskunde, Bd. I. (Halle, 1894.)

WILSER, L. — Stammbaum und Ausbreitung der Germanen. (Bonn, 1895.)

STEIN, F. — Die Völkerstämme der Germanen nach römischer Darstellung. (Schweinfurt, 1896.)

MULLER, S. Hz. — De germaansche volken bij Julius Honorius en anderen. VAA. 1895.

(*d*) *Ethnography*

Zeuss, K. — Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme. (München, 1837.)

The first comprehensive treatment of Teutonic ethnography.

Müllenhoff, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde. I (1870), Erstes Buch, Die Phoenizier; Zweites Buch, Pytheas von Massalia. II (1887), Drittes Buch, Die Nord- und Ostnachbaren der Germanen; Viertes Buch, Die Gallier und Germanen. III (1892), Fünftes Buch, Der Ursprung der Germanen.

Characterized by a wealth of material, incisive criticism, and brilliant combinations; also contains maps and excursus.

Much, R. — Die Südmark der Germanen. PBB. XVII, 1–136. Die Germanen am Niederrhein. PBB. XVII, 137–177. Goten und Ingvaeonen. PBB. XVII, 178–221.

Bremer, O. — Ethnographie der germanischen Stämme. PG.², III, 735–950.

At present the best and most comprehensive treatment; has maps and very full bibliographical references.

(*e*) *Tribal Sagas*

Brüder Grimm. — Deutsche Sagen. (Berlin; I, 1816; II, 1818.)

Grimm, Jacob. — Deutsche Mythologie ⁴, III, 377 ff.

Uhland, L. — Schriften zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage. VIII. Schwäbische Sagenkunde. (Stuttgart, 1873.)

Rydberg, V. — Undersökningar i germanisk Mythologi, I. (Stockholm, 1886.) (See p. 27, note 2.)

Contains an excellent treatment of the tribal sagas.

IV. HISTORY AND LITERATURE

(*a*) *Ancient Sources*

Cæsar. — De Bello Gallico, I, 50; IV, 7; VI, 21.

Plutarch. — Vitæ: Marius and Cæsar.

Strabo. — Geographica, VII, 2.

Pliny. — Historia Naturalis, IV, 27–31.

TACITUS. — De Origine, Situ, Moribus ac Populis Germanorum.
—— Annals, I, 51, 59, 61; II, 12, 88; IV, 73; XIII, 55, 57.
—— Histories, IV, 14, 22, 61, 65; V, 22.
—— Agricola, 28.

For Latin inscriptions in Germania and in other provinces where Teutonic legions were quartered the two chief collections are: the great Berlin edition, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum;* and Brambach, *Corpus Inscriptionum Rhenanarum* (Elberfeld, 1867).

(*b*) *Later Historians*

To most of these authors the remark made by Giesebrecht on Gregory of Tours is applicable, — that they furnish us with "Geschichten, keine Geschichte"; they constitute, however, our chief source for the history of this period.

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS. — Roman History. GddV., Urzeit, Bd. III.

Of the end of the fourth century. The books that have been preserved narrate the history of the years 353–378.

PROCOPIUS OF CÆSAREA. — De Bello Gothico, libri IV. GddV. 6. Jhdt., Bd. III.

Of the middle of the sixth century.

JORDANES. — De Origine Actibusque Getarum. MG., Auctores, V, 1 (1882); GddV. 6. Jhdt., Bd. I.

Of the year 551; is more or less dependent upon the lost work of Cassiodorus. The treatise reflects the dissensions of the period and makes a plea for a fusion of Gothic and Roman culture.

AGATHIAS. — Historiarum libri V. MPSG., Vol. LXXXVIII; GddV. 6. Jhdt., Bd. III.

Of about the year 578; a continuation of Procopius.

ANONYMUS VALESIANUS. — GddV. 6. Jhdt., Bd. III.

Of the sixth century; its most important parts deal with the struggle between Theodoric and Odoacer.

PAULUS DIACONUS. — Historia Longobardorum. Edited by Waitz, *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum.* (Hanover, 1878.) MPSL., Vol. XCV; GddV. 8. Jhdt., Bd. IV.

Is permeated with an ecclesiastical and classical spirit, but furnishes many sagas that are significant for the history of his people.

GREGORY OF TOURS.— Historia Francorum. MG., Scriptores Merov., I, 1 (1884); MPSL., Vol. LXXI. GddV. 6. Jhdt., Bd. IV, V.

The chief source for the history of the Franks.

FREDEGAR. — S. Gregorii Episcopi Historia Francorum Epitomata. MPSL., Vol. LXXI; GddV. 7. Jhdt., Bd. II.

Fredegar, and the *Gesta* below, have in part used sources other than those upon which Gregory is dependent.

Gesta Regum Francorum. MPSL., Vol. XCVI.

ISIDOR. — Historia Gothorum, Vandalorum, et Suevorum. MPSL., Vol. LXXXIV.

Deals with the period from A.D. 176–628.

SALVIANUS. — De Gubernatione Dei libri VIII. MPSL., Vol. LIII; MG., Auctores, I.

An important treatise, of the beginning of the fifth century, in which Salvianus, a presbyter of Massilia, trenchantly criticises the moral corruption of the Christianized Romance population among whom he lived. Incidentally, the pagan Saxons and Franks and the heretical Goths and Vandals are also dealt with.

(*c*) *Books dealing with Sources*

Of the numerous editions and commentaries of the *Germania* of Tacitus the following may here be mentioned. Commentaries: Baumstark, A., *Ausführliche Erläuterung der Germania des Tacitus* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1875–1880); Müllenhoff, K., *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, Bd. IV (1900). Editions: Schweizer-Sidler, U. Zernial, E. Wolff (German); H. Furneaux (English).

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde, Bd. II.

WAITZ, G. — Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte, Bd. I. (2d ed., Kiel, 1865.)

UHLAND, L. — Schriften zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage, VII, 468–515.

MOMMSEN, T. — Römische Geschichte, Bd. V, Chapters 1, 4.

SEECK, O. — Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt, Bd. I. (2d ed., Berlin, 1897.)

Contains an important chapter on the Teutons, who, in contrast with earlier idealizing notions, are in vivid colors depicted as barbarians.

(*d*) *General Works and Articles on Inscriptions*

ROSCHER, W. H. — Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie. (Leipzig, 1884 ff.)

More especially the articles *Hercules* and *Mars* and the literature there cited.

KERN, H. — Noms Germaniques dans les Inscriptions Latines. RC. II.

JANSSEN, L. J. F. — De romeinsche beelden en gedenksteenen van Zeeland. Uitgaven van 't Zeeuwsch Genootschap. (Middelburg, 1845.)

With plates.

KAUFFMANN, F. — Mythologische Zeugnisse aus römischen Inschriften. I. Hercules Magusanus. PBB. XV, 553–562. II. Mars Thingsus et duæ Alæsiagæ. PBB. XVI, 200–210. III. Dea Nehalennia. PBB. XVI, 210–234. IV. Dea Hludhana. PBB. XVIII, 134–157. V. Deus Requalivahanus. PBB. XVIII, 157–194.

(*e*) *Mars Thingsus*

On Mars Thingsus the following important articles are to be noted:

HÜBNER, E. — Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst, III, 120, 287. SCHERER, W. — SBA. 1884, pp. 571 ff. PLEYTE, W. — VMAA. IV, 2, 109 ff. (1885). BRUNNER, H. — ZSS., Germanistische Abteilung, V, 226 (1884).

WEINHOLD, K. — Tius Things. ZfdPh. XXI, 1–16.

JAEKEL, H. — Die alaisiagen Bede und Fimmilene. ZfdPh. XXII, 257–277.

SIEBS, TH. — Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie. ZfdPh. XXIV, 433–461.

HEINZEL, R. — Über die ostgothische Heldensage. SWA. CXIX, 50–54.

HOFFORY, J. — Eddastudien. (Berlin, 1889.)

Pp. 145–173; with plates.

(*f*) *Migration of Nations*

COULANGES, FUSTEL DE. — L'Invasion Germanique. Vol. II of Histoire des Institutions Politiques de l'ancienne France. (Paris, 1891.)

Sheds an entirely new light on this period.

RANKE, L. VON. — Weltgeschichte, Bd. III, IV.

A work of prime importance, both on account of the character of its narrative and its Analecta (a critical discussion of sources).

DAHN, F. — Urgeschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker. (4 vols., Berlin, 1881–1889.)

In Oncken's *Allgemeine Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen.*

(*g*) *Paganism and Christianity*

For a bibliography consult:

POTTHAST, A. — Bibliotheca Historica Medii Ævi. (2d ed., 2 vols., Berlin, 1896.)

Vol. I contains lists of the works contained in the great collections, such as the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, etc.

Geschichtschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit. Zweite Gesammtausgabe von W. Wattenbach. (1884 ff.)

Consists of translations of the important historical sources. Is cited above as GddV.

MÜLLENHOFF, K., and SCHERER, W. — Denkmäler deutscher Poesie und Prosa aus dem VIII–XII Jhdt. (3d ed., by Steinmeyer, Berlin, 1892.)

DAHLMANN, F. C. — Quellenkunde der deutschen Geschichte. (5th ed., by G. Waitz, Göttingen, 1883.)

A list of titles.

EBERT, A. — Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur des Mittelalters im Abendlande. (1st ed., 3 vols., Leipzig, 1874–1887; 2d ed., 1889 ff.)

WATTENBACH, W. — Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter bis zur Mitte des 13. Jhdts. (5th ed., 2 vols., Berlin, 1885–1886.)

LORENZ, A. — Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter von der Mitte des 13. bis zum Ende des 14. Jhdts. (2d ed., 2 vols., Berlin, 1876–1877.)

KÖGEL, R., and BRUCKNER, W. — Althoch- und altniederdeutsche Literatur. PG.², II, 29–160.

—— Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur bis zum Ausgange des Mittelalters. (I, 1, 2 : bis zur Mitte des 11. Jhdts., Strassburg, 1894–1897.)

On a more extensive scale than the sketch in PG.².

Vita S. Severini, Noricorum Apostoli. MPSL., Vol. LXII.

By his pupil Eugippius; Severinus died in 482.

Vita S. Columbani. MPSL., Vol. LXXXII.

By Jonas of Bobbio; Columbanus died in 615.

Vita Bonifacii. MG., Scriptores, II.

By Willibald, who died in 786.

Vita Willibrordi. MG., Scriptores, XXIII.

Written by Alcuin, in 800.

Vita Liudgeri. MG., Scriptores, II.

Written by Altfrid, in 850.

Vita S. Galli.

Various versions exist; the best known, that by Walafrid Strabo, who died in 849, is later than that published in MG. II.

Vita Anskarii. MG., Scriptores, II; MPSL., Vol. CXVIII; GddV., Vol. VII.

By Rimbert, of the ninth century.

Vita Sturmi. MG., Scriptores, II.

Sturm was the first abbot of Fulda; his *vita* is written by Eigil, who died in 822.

Vita Leobæ. MG., Scriptores, XV, 1.

Like the following, by Rudolph of Fulda, who died in 865.

Vita Rabani. MPSL., Vol. CVII; MG., Vol. XV.

Annales Fuldenses. MG., Scriptores, I.

The years 838–863 are from the hand of Rudolph of Fulda.

MARTINUS OF BRACARA. — De Correctione Rusticorum. MPSL., Vol. LXXII.

Martinus lived, in the sixth century, among the Suabian peasantry in Spain.

Dicta Abbatis Pirminii. MPSL., Vol. LXXXIX.

Indiculus Superstitionum et Paganiarum. MG., Leges, I.

SAUPE, H. A. — Der *Indiculus Superstitionum*. Ein Verzeichnis heidnischer und abergläubischer Gebräuche und Meinungen. (Leipzig, 1891.)

Homilia de Sacrilegiis; Capitula de Partibus Saxoniæ; Lex Saxonum; Pactus Alemanniæ.

HESSELS, J. H. — Salic Law. Enc. Brit.[9], XXI, 212–217.

Summarizes the above-mentioned laws.

WIDUKIND. — Res Gestæ Saxonicæ. MG., Vol. III; MPSL., Vol. CXXXVII.

Widukind was a Saxon monk in the monastery at Corvey. His work was completed about 967.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, § 25.

Enumerates the sources of ecclesiastical literature. The next two titles supplement his work.

CASPARI, C. P. — Kirchenhistorische Anecdota, Bd. I. (Christiania, 1883.)

—— Eine Homilia de Sacrilegiis. ZfdA. XXV, 313–336.

Texts of the Merseburg Charms, the Wessobrunn Prayer, and *Muspilli* will be found in MSD.[3], Braune's *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, and elsewhere. Of the editions of the *Heliand* those of Sievers, Heyne, and Piper may be mentioned.

MOLL, W. — Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland vóór de Hervorming. Deel I. (Arnhem & Utrecht, 1864.)

German translation, abridged by P. Zuppke (Leipzig, 1895).

HAUCK, A. — Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands. (I–III, 1, Leipzig, 1887–1893; 2d ed., I, 1898; II, 1900.)

RICHTHOFEN, K. FREIHERR VON. — Untersuchungen über die friesische Rechtsgeschichte. (2 vols., Berlin, 1880–1882.)

OZANAM, A. F. — Études Germaniques. (6th ed., 2 vols., 1893–1894.)

Popular in character.

WASSERSCHLEBEN, F. W. H. — Die Bussordnungen der abendländischen Kirche. (Halle, 1851.)

SCHMITZ, H. J. — Die Bussbücher und die Bussdisciplin der Kirche. (Mainz, 1883.)

PYPER, F. — Geschiedenis der boete en biecht in de christelijke Kerk. (The Hague, I, 1890; II, 1, 1896.)

More especially, II, 153–245.

KNAPPERT, L. — Over de vita Liudgeri. TT. 1892.

—— Vita St. Galli. TT. 1894.

ALBERT, F. R. — Die Geschichte der Predigt in Deutschland, Bd. I. (1892.)

Of the extensive literature on the Merseburg Charms, the *Heliand*, and the Wessobrunn Prayer the following works may here receive mention:

GRIMM, J. — Über zwei entdeckte Gedichte aus der Zeit des deutschen Heidenthums. Kleinere Schriften, II, 1–29.

GERING, H. — Der zweite Merseburger Spruch. ZfdPh. XXVI, 145–149; 462–467.

GRIENBERGER, TH. VON. — Die Merseburger Zaubersprüche. ZfdPh. XXVII, 433–462.

VILMAR, A. F. C. — Deutsche Altertümer im Heliand. (2d ed., Marburg, 1862.)

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — De Carmine Wessofontano. (Berolini, 1861.)

WACKERNAGEL, W. — Die altsächsische Bibeldichtung und das Wessobrunner Gebet. ZfdPh. I, 291–309.

(*h*) *The Anglo-Saxons — Sources*

It is evidently impossible to enumerate in the present connection the various editions of Anglo-Saxon texts. Aside from what is indicated below, editions of Beowulf, Bede, Gildas, and Nennius may be mentioned. On the latter the work of H. Zimmer, *Nennius Vindicatus* (Berlin, 1893) should be consulted.

GREIN, CHR. — Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie, neu bearbeitet von R. P. Wülker. (Kassel, 1881–1898.)

—— Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa, fortgesetzt von R. P. Wülker. (Kassel, 1872–1900.)

COCKAYNE, O. — Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England. (3 vols., London, 1864–1866.)

SCHMID, R. — Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen. (Leipzig, 1832; 2d ed., 1858.)

LIEBERMANN, F. — Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen. Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Savigny-Stiftung. (Halle, 1897 ff.)

HISTORIES OF LITERATURE

EBERT, A. — Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur des Mittelalters im Abendlande. (3 vols., 2d ed., Leipzig, 1889.)

BRINK, B. TEN. — Altenglische Literatur. PG.[1], II, i, 510–608.

Unfinished owing to the author's death.

—— Geschichte der englischen Litteratur, I. (2d ed., Strassb., 1899.)

An English translation by H. M. Kennedy appeared in New York, 1889.

MORLEY, H. — English Writers. An Attempt towards a History of English Literature. I. Introduction. Origins. Old Keltic Literature. Beowulf. (3d ed., London, 1891.)

WÜLKER, R. — Grundriss zur Geschichte der angelsächsischen Litteratur. (Leipzig, 1885.)

The most complete history of Anglo-Saxon literature; bibliographical references are very full.

GENERAL WORKS ON THE ANGLO-SAXONS

MOMMSEN, TH. — Römische Geschichte, Bd. V. The chapter entitled "Britannia."

LAPPENBERG, J. M. — Geschichte von England. I. Angelsächsische Zeit.

Hamburg, 1834; an English translation by B. Thorpe appeared under the title *Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1845); a revised edition of this latter was published in 1883.

WINKELMANN, F. — Geschichte der Angelsachsen, in Oncken's Allgemeine Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen. (1883.)

A brief but good survey.

FREEMAN, E. A. — Teutonic Conquest in Gaul and Britain. Four Oxford Lectures. (London, 1887.)

WEILAND, L. — Die Angeln. Ein Kapitel aus der deutschen Altertumskunde. (Tübingen, 1889.)

A short ethnographical study.

RHYS, J. — Celtic Britain. Publications of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. (London, 1884.)

ALLEN, CH. GRANT B. — Anglo-Saxon Britain. Publications of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. (London, n. d.)

KEMBLE, J. M. — The Saxons in England. (2 vols., new ed. by W. de Gray Birch, London, 1876.)

The extensive chapter "Heathendom" must be used with great caution.

—— Über die Stammtafel der Westsachsen. (München, 1836.)

HAACK, O. — Zeugnisse zur altenglischen Heldensage. (Kiel, 1892.)

BINZ, G. — Zeugnisse zur germanischen Sage in England. PBB. XX, 141–223.

BEDE

WERNER, K. — Beda der Ehrwürdige und seine Zeit. (Wien, 1875.)

KNAPPERT, L. — Christendom en heidendom in de kerkgeschiedenis van Beda den eerwaardige. TT. 1897.

For additional literature on Bede the references in Wülker should be consulted.

BEOWULF

BUGGE, S. — Studien über das Beowulfepos. PBB. XII, 1–112.

BRINK, B. TEN. — Beowulf. Untersuchungen. QuF. LXII. (Strassburg, 1888.)

SARRAZIN, G. — Beowulf-Studien. (Berlin, 1888.)

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Beowulf. Untersuchungen über das angelsächsische Epos und die älteste Geschichte der germanischen Seevölker. (Berlin, 1889.)

A work that is characterized by great acumen; its results have to a large extent been made use of in Chapter 7.

A general survey of the various opinions held concerning Beowulf will be found in Morley's *History of English Literature* mentioned above and in Symons' *Germanische Heldensage*, PG.², §§ 23–25. Gummere's *Germanic Origins* takes special account of the Anglo-Saxons. Attention may also be called to the work of G. Stephens on the Old-Northern Runic Monuments and that of Steenstrup on the Danish and Norse settlements in Britain.

(*i*) *The North before the Viking Period*

SAXO GRAMMATICUS. — Historia Danica.

There are two editions of Saxo: that of Müller-Velschow, with *Notæ Uberiores*, Kopenhagen, 1839–1858, and a critical edition by A. Holder, *Gesta Danorum*, Strassburg, 1886. The English translation by Elton will be found mentioned below. Recently (Berlin, 1900) there has also appeared a German translation, with notes, by H. Jantzen. Of the sixteen books of which the *Historia Danica* is composed, nine deal with historical saga.

ÅGESEN, SVEN. — Gesta seu Compendiosa Historia Regum Daniæ. MG., Scriptores, XXIX: Ex Suenonis Aggonis Gestis Regum Danorum.

Of the twelfth century.

Annales Lundenses. MG., Scriptores, XXIX.

Covers the early period approximately up to 1265. Compare Waitz in *Nordalbingische Studien*, V.

GRUNDTVIG, SV. — Danmarks gamle Folkeviser. (5 vols., Kopenhagen, 1853–1890.)

The first volume, published in 1853, is of special importance.

GRIMM, WILHELM. — Altdänische Heldenlieder, Balladen und Märchen. (Heidelberg, 1811.)

Among the Old Norse material the Ynglinga Saga — the first part of the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson — is a source of the first rank. The Fornaldarsögur, dealing with the period preceding the reign of Harald Fairhair, also contain much available material. Of the poetry some Eddic songs and other pieces such as *Bjarkamál* and *Krakumál* are important. Under the head of Norway and Iceland (*j*) the Norse material will be treated with greater detail.

Alongside of the aforementioned sources, scholars have recently made a more extended use of medieval historians and cloister chronicles, both of Scandinavia and the countries of Western Europe, which had hitherto been largely neglected. For the history of the Viking incursions, the expeditions of the Norsemen, and of the kingdoms they established, these constitute the best and richest source of information.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ADAM OF BREMEN. — Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiæ Pontificum usque ad Annum 1072 A.D. MG. VII; GddV. II. Jhdt., Bd. VI.

General Historical Works

Petersen, N. M. — Danmarks Historie i Hedenold. (Kopenhagen, 1834; 2d ed., 3 vols., 1854–1855.)

Müller, L. Chr. — Danmarks Sagnhistorie. (Kopenhagen, 1836; 4th ed., 1874.)

Müller, P. E. — Sagabibliothek. (3 vols., Kopenhagen, 1817–1820.)

Sars, J. E. — Udsigt over den norske Historie, Vol. I. (2 vols., Christiania, 1873–1877.)

Munch, P. A. — Det norske Folks Historie, I, 1. (8 vols., Christiania, 1852–1859.)

Jessen, C. A. E. — Undersögelser til nordisk Oldhistorie. (Kopenhagen, 1862.)

Steenstrup, J. C. H. R. — Normannerne. I. Indledning i Normannertiden. II. Vikingetogene. III. Danske og norske Riger på de brittiske Öer. IV. Danelag. (Kopenhagen, 1876–1882.)

Storm, G. — Kritiske Bidrag til Vikingetidens Historie. (Christiania, 1878.)

Worsaae, J. J. A. — Minder om de Danske og Nordmændene i England, Skotland, og Irland. (Kopenhagen, 1851.)

Keary, C. F. — The Vikings in Western Christendom, A.D. 789–A.D. 888. (New York, 1891.)

Chaillu, P. B. Du. — The Viking Age. (2 vols., New York, 1889.)

Saxo Grammaticus

Elton, O., and Powell, F. York. — The First Nine Books of the Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus. Publications of the Folklore Society. (London, 1894.)

The comprehensive Introduction by York Powell discusses the various questions that arise in connection with Saxo; in regard to mythological matters the arbitrary theories of V. Rydberg are followed too blindly.

Ettmüller, L. — Altnordischer Sagenschatz. (Leipzig, 1870.)

Contains also the greater part of the material from Saxo.

Olrik, A. — Kilderne til Sakses Oldhistorie. (2 vols., Kopenhagen, 1892–1894.)

Continues the scientific consideration of the *Historia Danica*, which had been sorely neglected since the publication of the *Notæ Uberiores* of Müller-Velschow; makes a detailed attempt to distinguish between the Norse and Danish sources of Saxo, which was followed by a discussion between Steenstrup and Olrik cited in the two following titles:

STEENSTRUP, J. — Saxo Grammaticus og den danske og svenske Oldtidshistorie. AfnF. XIII, 101–161.

OLRIK, A. — Tvedelingen af Sakses Kilder. AfnF. XIV, 47–93.

SONG AND SAGA

OLRIK, A. — Bråvallakvadets Kæmperække. AfnF. X, 223–287.

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde, Bd. V.

On the Bravalla song and the songs of Starkad.

BUGGE, S. — Helge-Digtene i den ældre Edda, deres Hjem og Forbindelser. (Kopenhagen, 1896.)

A translation of this by W. H. Schofield has appeared under the title *Home of the Eddic Poems, with Especial Reference to the Helgi-Lays* (London, 1899).

BOER, R. C. — Zur dänischen Heldensage. PBB. XXII, 342–390.

NORSEMEN AND KELTS

MOGK, E. — Kelten und Nordgermanen im 9. und 10. Jahrhunderte. (Leipzig, 1896.)

ZIMMER, H. — Keltische Beiträge. ZfdA. XXXII, 196–334; XXXIII, 129–220, 257–338; XXXV, 1–172.

—— Über die frühesten Berührungen der Iren mit den Nordgermanen. SBA. 1891, pp. 279–317.

MEYER, K., and NUTT, A. — The Voyage of Bran, the Son of Febal. With an Essay upon the Irish Vision of the Happy Otherworld and the Celtic Doctrine of Rebirth. Grimm Library, IV, VI. (London, 1895–1897.)

EARLY MISSIONS

HAUCK, A. — Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands. (3 vols., Leipzig, 1887–1896; 2d ed., Vols. I, II, Leipzig, 1898–1900.)

STEENSTRUP, J. — Vort første Naboskab med Tyskerne. Dansk Tidsskrift, 1898.

(*j*) *Norway and Iceland*

For a survey of the extensive Norse literature bibliographies and histories of literature should be consulted. The more important of these are cited below.

MÖBIUS, TH. — Catalogus Librorum Islandicorum et Norwegicorum Ætatis Mediæ. (Lipsiæ, 1856.)

Contains also the *Skáldatal sive Poetarum Recensus.*

—— Verzeichnis der auf dem Gebiete der altnordischen (altisländischen und altnorwegischen) Sprache und Literatur von 1855–1879 erschienenen Schriften. (Leipzig, 1880.)

MAURER, K. — Über die Ausdrücke: altnordische, altnorwegische, und isländische Sprache. AMA. 1867, pp. 457–706.

This and the following essay of Maurer mark the beginning of a new period in the study of Norse literature.

—— Über die norwegische Auffassung der nordischen Literaturgeschichte. ZfdPh. I, 25–88.

VIGFÚSSON, G. — Sturlunga Saga, I. Prolegomena: XVII–CCXIV. (Oxford, 1878.)

Contains a history of literature.

MOGK, E. — Norwegisch-isländische Literatur. PG.[1], II, 1, 71–142.

JÓNSSON, F. — Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie. (Kopenhagen; I, 1894; II, 1901.)

The most important history of Norse literature.

The sources consist (1) of scaldic songs, of which we possess a large number, in part intercalated in various sagas; (2) of the poetic Edda, composed of some thirty-five lays, divided into two classes, — those dealing with gods and those dealing with heroes; (3) of the Snorra Edda, consisting of *Gylfaginning*, which treats of myths, and of *Bragarœdhur*, *Skáldskaparmál*, *Háttatal*, which have to do with poetics; (4) of sagas, narratives in prose, that differ greatly in contents, including ancient sagas, heroic sagas, Icelandic family histories, political history, and, at a later time, fiction as well.

VIGFÚSSON, G., and POWELL, F. YORK. — Corpus Poeticum Boreale. (2 vols., Oxford, 1883.)

An edition of all that we possess of Old Norse poetry, both scaldic and Eddic songs, with a translation, Introduction, and excursus. Should be used with circumspection, as it is frequently untrustworthy. Compare p. 47, above.

Edda. We possess editions by S. Bugge (Christiania, 1867), Grundtvig (Kopenhagen, 1874), K. Hildebrand (Paderborn, 1876), B. Symons (I, Götterlieder, Halle, 1888; II, Heldenlieder, Halle, 1901), F. Jónsson (Halle, 1888–1890). There is also a complete glossary to the Edda by H. Gering (2d ed., Halle, 1896). The first part (A–K) of a "Vollständiges Wörterbuch zu den Liedern der Edda," by the same author, which gives exhaustive references under each word, has just appeared (Halle, 1901). Among the German translators of the Edda the following deserve to be mentioned: the Grimm Brothers (Berlin, 1815); F. W. Bergmann (in several volumes, partly in French, Strassburg, 1871–1879), now antiquated; K. Simrock (Stuttgart, several editions), until recent years in general use; H. Gering, *Die Edda* (Leipzig und Wien, 1892), with brief luminous notes; indispensable. In English, aside from the prose translation in CPB., there is a metrical rendering by B. Thorpe (London, 1866).

Wilken, E. — Untersuchungen zur Snorra Edda. (Paderborn, 1878.)

Jessen, E. — Über die Eddalieder. Heimat, Alter, Charakter. ZfdPh. III, 1–84, 251–252, 494.

Symons, B. — Bijdrage tot de dagteekening der Eddaliederen. VMAA. 1887, pp. 220–242.

Hoffory, J. — Eddastudien. (Berlin, 1889.)

Müllenhoff, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde, Bd. V.

Of Norse sagas we possess a number of good editions, by such scholars as S. Bugge and G. Vigfússon. At present an *Altnordische Sagabibliothek* (Halle, 1892 ff.) is in course of publication, in which sagas are provided with notes and introductions by various scholars. A considerable part of the material is also accessible in the form of translations. Thus the German translation of the Volsunga Saga by von der Hagen has been revised by Edzardi (Stuttgart, 1880). Are's *Isländerbuch* was both edited and translated by Th. Möbius (1869). There are also translations into Danish by P. A. Munch, *Norges Konge-Sagaer* (2 vols., 1859 and 1871), as well as others undertaken under the direction of the Nordiske Oldskrift Selskab. Of translations into English there are the following:

Dasent, G. W. — The Story of Burnt Njal. (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1861.)

Unsurpassed in the field of translations from the Norse; preceded by an excellent Introduction.

The Saga Library. Edited by William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon. (5 vols., London, 1891 ff.)

Vols. III, IV, V contain the *Heimskringla.*

The Northern Library. I. The Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason, translated by J. Sephton. (London, 1895.) II. The Tale of Thrond of Gate, commonly called Færeyinga Saga, englished by F. York Powell. (London, 1896.) VI. The Saga of King Sverri of Norway (Sverrissaga), translated by J. Sephton. (London, 1899.)

The saga of Thorwald Kodransson and the Kristni Saga are of special importance for the history of the Christianization. The Norwegian and Icelandic laws — the latter are the so-called Grágás — and monographs dealing with them occasionally throw light on pagan usages and conditions.

LASONDER, E. H. — De Saga van Thorwald Kodransson den Bereisde. (Utrecht, 1886.)

BRENNER, O. — Über die Kristni-Saga. (München, 1878.)

DÖRING, B. — Bemerkungen über Typus und Stil der isländischen Saga. (Leipzig, 1877.)

HEINZEL, R. — Beschreibung der isländischen Saga. SWA. 1880, pp. 107–306.

STORM, G. — Snorre Sturlassöns Historieskrivning. (Kopenhagen, 1873.)

MAGNUSSON, A. — Vita Sæmundi. (1787.)

Still of some value.

PETERSEN, N. M. — Danmarks Historie i Hedenold. (See p. 437, above.)

STEENSTRUP, J. C. H. R. — Normannerne. (See p. 437, above.)

Petersen and Steenstrup deal more particularly with Denmark. For Norway the standard works are the following two books:

SARS, J. E. — Udsigt over den norske Historie. (See p. 437, above.)

MUNCH, P. A. — Det norske Folks Historie. (See p. 437, above.)

KEYSER, R. — Efterladte Skrifter. (2 vols., Christiania, 1866 1867.)

Somewhat antiquated, but still valuable; also contains a comprehensive history of literature.

WEINHOLD, K. — Altnordisches Leben. (Berlin, 1856.)

An excellent and readable account.

GUDHMUNDSSON, V., and KÅLUND, K. — Sitte. Skandinavische Verhältnisse. PG.², III, 407–479.

MAURER, K. — Die Bekehrung des norwegischen Stammes zum Christenthume. (2 vols., München, 1855–1856.)

—— Island. (München, 1874.)

Written on the occasion of the festival in celebration of the one thousandth anniversary of the settlement of Iceland. The SMA. and EuG. also contain many articles on Norse literature and law by the same scholar.

V. PANTHEON

WODAN-ODHIN

LEO, H. — Ueber Othins Verehrung in Deutschland. (Erlangen, 1822.)

Leo was the first to call attention to the geographical limits of the worship of Odhin.

WACHTER, F. — Othin. EuG. VII, 288–332 (1836).

MAGNUSEN, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexicon, pp. 261–377. (Havniæ, 1828.)

Magnusen collected the data from Saxo, the Edda, and other Norse sources; his Asiatic parallels are as untenable as his interpretation of Odhin as "director anni solaris."

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie⁴, I, 109–137; III, 48–61.

Grimm has here been led astray through transferring the medieval personification *Wunsch*, "den Inbegriff von Heil und Seligkeit," to Odhin. Grimm's conception of Wodan as the all-pervading spirit — "qui omnia permeat" — is met with in the works of many other scholars, as, *e.g.* in the two that follow below.

PETERSEN, N. M. — Nordisk Mythologi. (Kopenhagen, 1849; 2d ed., 1863.)

MENZEL, W. — Odin. (Stuttgart, 1855.)

Full of the wildest speculations; practically worthless.

UHLAND, L. — Odin. Schriften, VI, 129–426.

A detailed and valuable study, more especially as regards the Norse myths of the poets' mead and the finding of the runes.

Here, as elsewhere, Müllenhoff (the special essays are noted below) gave a new impetus by attacking what had hitherto been the fixed point of departure, viz. that

Wodan was the chief god of all Teutons. According to Müllenhoff, Wodan usurped the place that originally belonged to the old sky god Tiu. This view has been accepted by most of the recent investigators.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 328–346.

Mogk makes an attempt not merely to group the various aspects and functions of Wodan, but also to trace the historical development of his cult; the latter he believes to have existed among the tribes of North and West Germany only, not among those of Upper (Southern) Germany. He regards Wodan as constituting originally one of the functions of the sky god Tiwaz-Wodanaz, who thereupon entered upon an independent development as god of the wind, and was equipped with numerous new functions and attributes at the hands more especially of the Norse scalds.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 313–340.

Meyer regards the god of the wind as the development of a wind demon and discovers numerous foreign and Christian elements in his myths.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 283–359.

Golther is likewise of the opinion that Wodan was developed to a large extent from the storm demon Wode; he believes this development to have taken place in the region of the Lower Rhine under the influence of the Roman-Gallic Mercurius.

WISÉN, TH. — Oden och Loke. (Stockholm, 1873.)

DONAR-THOR

MAGNUSEN, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexicon, pp. 617–696.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie⁴, I, 138–159.

—— Über die Namen des Donners. Kleinere Schriften, II, 402–438.

Grimm has here collected Keltic (*Taranis*), Slavic (*Perkunas*), and Finnish (*Ukko*) parallels.

MANNHARDT, W. — Germanische Mythen, pp. 1–242.

This study dates from the earlier period of Mannhardt's development, for a characterization of which see p. 28. Mannhardt here occupies himself with fancied resemblances between Thor and Indra.

PETERSEN, H. — Om Nordboernes Gudedyrkelse og Gudetro i Hedenold. (Kopenhagen, 1876.)

Points out the national character of the Thor cult in Norway; compare p. 37, above.

UHLAND, L. — Der Mythus von Thor. Schriften, VI, 1–128.

Interprets in a very attractive manner the Norse myths of Thor, in large part allegorically, as symbolizing the reclaiming of the rocky soil to the uses of agriculture.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 353–365.

Regards Donar as a special aspect of the ancient sky god Tiwaz-Thunaraz.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 267–294.

Meyer, while also recognizing in the myths of Thor later Christian elements, especially in the rôle that Thor plays in the world-drama, still regards most of the accounts of combats with giants as representing genuine myths of seasons, and it is as such that he proceeds to analyze them.

On the whole, views respecting Donar-Thor are less divergent than those respecting Wodan-Odhin, all scholars whose opinion is worth having being agreed that he represents the god of thunder.

TIWAZ (TIU, ZIU, TYR)

MAGNUSEN, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexicon, pp. 482–491.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie⁴, I, 160–172.

Grimm recognized the points of resemblance between Tiu and Zeus, as well as the lofty character of the ancient sky god.

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Über Tuisco und seine Nachkommen. Schmidt's AZfG. VIII, 209–269.

Müllenhoff enters a strong plea for Tiu as the original chief god of the whole Teutonic race, who was subsequently displaced by Wodan; direct historical testimony, as well as tribal names and heroic sagas, still bear evidence to the high position Tiu once occupied. These conclusions have been accepted by many of the younger generation of scholars, *e.g.* by Hoffory, Mogk, and Symons.

HOFFORY, J. — Eddastudien, pp. 143–173.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 313–328.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 200–217.

Accepts the results of Müllenhoff in a somewhat modified form.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 295–299.

His view that Tiu is the god of lightning to be placed alongside of Thor, the god of thunder, is untenable.

MUCH, R. — Der germanische Himmelsgott. Festgabe für Richard Heinzel, pp. 189–278. (Halle, 1898.)

The most recent study on the subject. Much, while adhering to Müllenhoff's main contention, combats in this comprehensive investigation, which deals with a number of Teutonic deities, the identification of Baldr, Heimdallr, and Freyr with the sky god, such as is usually advocated by the followers of Müllenhoff.

THE VANIR

Njǫrdhr-Nerthus, Freyr-Freyja

MAGNUSEN, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexicon, pp. 77–100, 251–255, 537.

Regards the Vanir as gods of the air; reaches the height of absurdity in combining Freyr with the Egyptian sun god Phra.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie[4], I, 173–181.

UHLAND, L. — Schriften, VI, 150–188.

Regards the Vanir as the bountiful, beneficent gods of the atmosphere.

MANNHARDT, W. — Baumkultus, Chapter 7.

Considers Nerthus a male demon of vegetation and explains the procession in the light of parallel processions in spring.

WEINHOLD, K. — Über den Mythus vom Wanenkrieg. SBA. 1890, pp. 611–625.

A classical treatise; defines the opposition between Æsir and Vanir as a cult war, applicable also to the moral and natural world; the Vanir are the joyous, wealthy gods of light, opposed to the dark, chthonic Wodan.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.[2], III, 318–323.

Regards Freyr as the Norse form of the sky god Tiu, derived from the Ingævones.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 300–309.

Describes, most curiously, Freyr as the idealized elf of thunder, just as Thor is the idealized giant of thunder. Similarly, Njǫrdhr is the elf of the wind (§ 347).

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 218–241.

Accepts the cult war of Weinhold.

KOCK, A. — Die Göttin Nerthus und der Gott Njǫrdhr. ZfdPh. XXVIII, 289–294.

Treats of the pairs Njǫrdhr-Nerthus, Freyr-Freyja.

DETTER, F., and HEINZEL, R. — Hœnir und der Vanenkrieg. PBB. XVIII, 542–560.

—— Zur Ynglingasaga. PBB. XVIII, 72–105.

In these two essays the Vanir and their myths have been combined with various sagas from Saxo and other sources, reconstructions that are very ingenious but without a sufficient basis of reality. The latter remark applies also to the essay of Much mentioned below.

MUCH, R. — Der germanische Himmelsgott. Festgabe für Richard Heinzel.

Commentaries on Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 40, *Völuspa*, 21–24, *Ynglingasaga*, Chapter 4, which constitute the chief passages where these gods are mentioned, may also be consulted.

BALDR

MAGNUSEN, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexicon, pp. 20–29.

Regards Baldr as the god of summer, the Semitic Baal.

NILSSON, S. — Die Ureinwohner des scandinavischen Nordens. (Hamburg, 1865.)

Accepts the identification of Magnusen.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie[4], I, 182–189.

In this and the next essay of Grimm most of the available material will be found collected.

—— Über zwei entdeckte Gedichte aus der Zeit des deutschen Heidenthums. Kleinere Schriften, II, 1–29.

BUGGE, S. — Studien über die Entstehung der nordischen Götter- und Heldensagen, deutsch von O. Brenner, pp. 1–135.

Finds the origin of the Danish accounts in great part in the history of the Trojan war, Baldr representing Achilles, Hǫdhr Paris, and Nanna Œnone. The Norse form of the myth he traces to the gospel of Nicodemus and medieval English sources, making use of such features as the death of Christ, the spear thrust in the side of Christ by the blind Longinus, etc. Loki is Lucifer. The putting of plants under oath is derived from a Jewish work. Olrik, Müllenhoff, and Rydberg attack Bugge's views in the works cited below.

OLRIK, A. — Sakses Oldhistorie, II, 13–46.

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde, Bd. V.

Müllenhoff, K. — Zeugnisse und Excurse zur deutschen Heldensage. ZfdA. XII, 329, 353.

Rydberg, V. — Undersökningar i germanisk Mythologi, II, 202.

Frazer, J. G. — The Golden Bough. (2d ed., III, 236–350.)

The two main features of the Baldr myth, the *mistiltcinn* (mistletoe) and the burning of the dead god, are to be explained from popular ritualistic ceremonies, viz. from the gathering of the mistletoe, which was viewed as the seat of the life of the oak, and from the fire-festivals, the essential feature of which was the burning of a man who represented the tree-spirit.

Weinhold, K. — Die Sagen von Loki. ZfdA. VII, 1–94.

Weinhold interprets the myth of Baldr allegorically: blind war (Hǫdhr) slays peace (Baldr), but itself falls on the field of battle (Vali); noble courage (Nanna) also succumbs, and the return of peace is prevented by vengeance (Thǫkt).

Mogk, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 323–327.

Considers Baldr as a form of the sky god and his myth as a year-myth.

Meyer, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 342–344.

Baldr is originally an Odhin of summer; his myth, however, is largely made up of classical and Christian elements, as Bugge has shown.

Golther, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 366–386.

Explains Baldr as the god of light and of summer; does not regard the details of his myth as capable of analysis.

Kauffmann, F. — Deutsche Mythologie, pp. 83–89.

Is of the opinion that the heroic saga of Saxo is more original than the Eddic account, which has made Baldr into a god; Kauffmann also assumes Christian influences.

Detter, F. — Zur Ynglingasaga. PBB. XVIII, 72–105.
—— Der Baldrmythus. PBB. XIX, 495–516.

Detter in these two essays attempts, in a very arbitrary manner, to sketch the development of the saga.

Niedner, F. — Baldr's Tod. ZfdA. XLIV, 305–335.

Describes the development of the myth as it appears in the sources; a sober and fruitful study.

Forsete (Fosite)

Grimm, Jacob. — Deutsche Mythologie[4], I, 190–192.

Grimm here cites in full the passages bearing on Forsete and his cult on Helgoland from Alcuin's *Life of Willebrord*, Altfrid's *Life of Liudger*, and Adam of Bremen's *De Situ Daniæ*.

Richthofen, K. Freiherr von. — Untersuchungen über die friesische Rechtsgeschichte, II, 434–437.

Hettema, F. Buitenrust. — Fosete, Fosite, Foste. TvnTeL. 1893, pp. 281–288.

Considers Fosite a form of Donar.

Heimdallr

Magnusen, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexicon, pp. 145–149.

Regards Heimdallr as a god of summer, of the month in which the sun is in the sign of the Cancer; also identifies him with the rainbow.

Meyer, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 310, 311.

Assumes extensive Christian influences.

Golther, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 359–366.

Likewise makes much of Christian influences.

Müllenhoff, K. — Frija und der Halsbandmythus. ZfdA. XXX, 217–260.

An important essay; regards Heimdallr as god of the sky.

Mogk, E. — Mythologie. PG.[2], III, 317–318.

Accepts the view of Müllenhoff.

Loki

Grimm, Jacob. — Deutsche Mythologie[4], I, 199–204.

Connects Loki with Grendel in *Beowulf* and with the bound Prometheus as well.

Meyer, C. — Loki und sein Mythenkreis. (Basel, 1880.)

Wislicenus, H. — Loki. (Zürich, 1867.)

Wisén, Th. — Oden och Loke. (Stockholm, 1873.)

WEINHOLD, K. — Die Sagen von Loki. ZfdA. VII, 1–94.

An important study; regards Loki as an ancient chief divinity, subsequently diabolified, but originally a cosmogonic force, representing the elements of fire, water, and air.

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Frija und der Halsbandmythus. ZfdA. XXX, 217–260.

Regards his origin as due to a genuine nature-myth.

BUGGE, S. — Studien über die Entstehung der nordischen Götter- und Heldensagen, deutsch von O. Brenner, pp. 73–83.

Traces the origin of Loki to Lucifer.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 346–353.

Attempts to distinguish between the old genuine mythical constituents, in which Loki is a sky god, and the later abstract scaldic myths.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 217–223.

Classes him among the "higher demons"; originally he represents sheet-lightning; his rôle in the myth of Baldr is wholly derived from Christian conceptions.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 406–428.

Believes Loki to be a product of the Norse eschatology, which arose under Christian influences and was fused with an ancient fire demon.

HIRSCHFELD, M. — Untersuchungen zur Lokasenna. AG. I. (Berlin, 1889.)

Contains an important chapter on Loki, in which an attempt is made to separate the various sides of the god.

It is somewhat startling to find, on examining this literature, with how many characters from myth and saga Loki has been identified: Agni, Vritra, Prometheus, Vulcan, Lucifer, Grendel, Wieland the smith, Hagen, Sibeche-Sabene, Reinecke Fuchs, and Louki, the wife of Pohjolen from *Kalewala*.

VIDHARR

KAUFFMANN, F. — Deutsche Mythologie, pp. 93–95.

—— Deus Requalivahànus. PBB. XVIII, 157–194.

Kauffmann regards Vidharr as the great Teutonic god of the forest, identical with Heimdallr, Hœnir, and the deus Requalivahanus, whose abode is the darkness. He is the god of justice and order, who dwells apart from the world, who, when the world threatens to go out of joint, again restores

the accustomed order of things, and who upon the fall of the other gods will fill the vacant throne. There is no good reason, however, for assigning, with Kauffmann, so high a place to this god of the forest when we remember that the forest was the place of worship of all the chief Teutonic deities.

Roediger, M. — Der grosse Waldesgott der Germanen. ZfdPh. XXVII, 1–14.

Attacks the position of Kauffmann; Roediger considers Vidharr the god of the heath; so also Golther, *Germanische Mythologie*, p. 395.

Much, R. — Der germanische Himmelsgott, pp. 222–224.

Vali

Mullenhoff, K. — Nordalbingische Studien, I, 11–40 (1844).

An attempt to identify Vali with Welo, an Old-Saxon spring deity, who brings light and blessing.

Bragi

Uhland, L. — Schriften, VI, 277–305.

Vigfússon, G. — CPB. II, 2 ff.

Gering, H. — Kvædhabrot Braga ens gamla. (Halle, 1886.)

Mogk, E. — Bragi als Gott und Dichter. PBB. XII, 383–393.

Bugge, S. — Der Gott Bragi in den nordischen Gedichten. PBB. XIII, 187–202.

Mogk, E. — Bragi. PBB. XIV, 81–90.

Jónsson, F. — Om Skjaldepoesien og de ældste Skjalde. AfnF. VI, 121–155.

—— Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie (Kopenhagen, 1893 ff.), I, 417–425.

Bugge, S. — Bidrag til den ældste Skaldedigtnings Historie. (Christiania, 1894.)

Bugge denies, whereas Jónsson and Mogk maintain, the historical existence of the scald Bragi.

Goddesses

Grimm, Jacob. — Deutsche Mythologie[4], I,207–262.

Grimm includes a number of goddesses, such as Zisa, Abundia, etc., which later mythologists have justly eliminated. He is correct, however, in supposing that the several goddesses are closely related and readily pass over the one into the other. He regards them as variant forms of the goddess of the earth.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Kleinere Schriften, V, 416–438.

Discusses various goddesses; the *Vanadís*, which he identifies with the Thracian goddess of the moon, Bendis (pp. 430–438), is in reality the Vanir goddess Freyja.

WEINHOLD, K. — Die deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter.

Contains, in the second chapter, a survey of the goddesses.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 366–376.

Views the goddesses as representatives of Mother Earth; in this second edition he has, however, grouped Holda and Perchta under the rubric "Seelenglaube."

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 349–378.

Recognizes goddesses of the clouds alone, of which those of the sun and earth are offshoots. The various conceptions of cloud goddesses he groups according to the seasons.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 428–500.

Maintains the untenable position that goddesses are invariably younger than gods; he too classes Frau Holle and Perchta among the "alleged goddesses."

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Frija und der Halsbandmythus. ZfdA. XXX, 217–260.

According to Müllenhoff the myth of the *Himmelskönigin* is part of the original Zeus worship of the Teutons, Frija having of old been the consort of Tiu.

JAEKEL, H. — Die Hauptgöttin der Istvaeen. ZfdPh. XXIV, 289–311.

Regards Nehalennia-Aiwa-Tamfana as goddess of the earth and of fire, of the hearth and the harvest, of fruitfulness and death.

KAUFFMANN, F. — Nehalennia. PBB. XVI, 210–234.

—— Dea Hludhana. PBB. XVIII, 134–157.

KNAPPERT, L. — De beteekenis van de wetenschap van het folklore voor de godsdienstgeschiedenis onderzocht en aan de Holda-mythen getoetst. (Amsterdam, 1887.)

Knappert reduces the functions of Holda to four heads: she is goddess of vegetable and animal fruitfulness, of birth and death, of domestic work, and of atmospheric phenomena.

VI. THE GERMAN HEROIC SAGA

Sources and General Works of Reference

Müller, P. E. — Sagabibliothek med anmærkninger og indledende afhandlinger. (3 vols., Kopenhagen, 1817–1820.)

Deals in large part with Norse material, but also takes some account of German sagas.

Grimm, Wilhelm. — Die deutsche Heldensage. (1st ed., 1829; 2d ed., by Müllenhoff, 1867; 3d ed., by R. Steig, 1889.)

The whole work is divided into two sections: *Zeugnisse* and *Ursprung und Fortbildung*.

Müllenhoff, K. — Zeugnisse und Excurse zur deutschen Heldensage. ZfdA. XII, 253–386; XV, 413–436.

—— Frija und der Halsbandmythus. ZfdA. XXX, 217–260.

Grimm, Jacob. — Gedanken über Mythos, Epos und Geschichte. Kleinere Schriften, IV, 74–85.

Jiriczek, O. L. — Die deutsche Heldensage. Sammlung Göschen, No. 32. (Stuttgart, 1894; 2d ed., 1897.)

A succinct and clear account; the surveys are in part taken from Uhland.

—— Deutsche Heldensagen, Bd. I. (Strassburg, 1898.)

In process of publication; an excellent work whose aim is to trace "die Entwickelungsgeschichte der Stoffe."

Grundtvig, S. — Udsigt over den nordiske Oldtids heroiske Digtning. (Kopenhagen, 1867.)

Valuable for its estimate of the ethical and poetical sides of the heroic saga; deals with the Norse material alone.

Uhland, L. — Schriften zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage, Bd. I, VII.

Contains excellent surveys; is unsurpassed in its characterizations.

Meyer, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 379–386.

Symons, B. — Heldensage. PG.^{2}, III, 606–734.

An accurate and exhaustive account; gives a complete survey of the contents as well as of the literature of Teutonic sagas.

GOLTHER, W. — Studien zur germanischen Sagengeschichte. I. Der Valkyrjenmythus. II. Über das Verhältnis der nordischen und deutschen Form der Nibelungensage. AMA. 1888, pp. 401–502.

HEINZEL, R. — Über die ostgothische Heldensage. SWA. CXIX (1889), 1–98.

LICHTENBERGER, H. — Le Poème et la Légende des Nibelungen. (Paris, 1891.)

DIETRICH SAGA

MEYER, K. — Die Dietrichssage in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwickelung. (Basel, 1868.)

STORM, G. — Sagnkredsene om Karl den Store og Didrik af Bern hos de nordiske Folk. (Christiania, 1874.)

PAUL, H. — Die Thidhrekssaga und das Nibelungenlied. SMA. 1900, pp. 297–338.

VII. ANIMISM AND FOLKLORE

(*a*) *Animism*

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie[4], II, 689–700 and *passim*.

Both Grimm and Wolf (see the next title) deserve mention as having to a considerable extent made use of evidence from folklore long before, under the influence of Tylor and other scholars, other mythologists set out to gather similar material.

WOLF, J. W. — Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie, I, 205–254 and *passim*.

LAISTNER, L. — Das Rätsel der Sphinx. (2 vols., Berlin, 1889.)

First introduced the notions of mare and incubus into the study of mythology, notions that play a prominent part in the works of the three scholars mentioned below.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.[2], III, 249–285.

As in all recent works on mythology, this phase of the study is emphasized by Mogk; Walkyries and Norns he treats under the head of "Seelenglaube." He differentiates quite sharply between souls and demons of nature.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 89–109.

Meyer classes Walkyries and Norns under the "higher demons"; he regards souls, demons, and gods as the same beings in different stages of development.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 72–122.

Golther also supposes Walkyries and Norns to have originated from the belief in souls.

(*b*) *Folklore*

Sources and works dealing with sources largely coincide. They consist of collections of tales and legends, of manners and customs. The vastness of the material may be seen from the bibliographical surveys in Paul's *Grundriss* (first edition), under the headings *Skandinavische Volkspoesie*, by J. A. Lundell (II, 1, 719–749); *Deutsche und niederländische Volkspoesie*, by J. Meyer (II, 1, 750–836); *Englische Volkspoesie*, by A. Brandl (II, 1, 837–860); and *Die Behandlung der volkstümlichen Sitte der Gegenwart*, by E. Mogk (II, 2, 265–286). The sectional character of most of the folklore collections should be noted. By way of supplement we may add: A. Olrik, *Folkeminder; Salmonsens Konversations Leksikon*, Kopenhagen, 1897. Most German mythologists have laid special emphasis on the study of folklore; so J. and W. Grimm, J. W. Wolf, F. Panzer, A. Kuhn, F. L. W. Schwartz, W. Mannhardt, L. Laistner, E. H. Meyer, E. Mogk, and W. Golther; this is perhaps least true of K. Müllenhoff, despite the fact that he collected the legends of Schleswig-Holstein.

Of special periodicals the following are important:

Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft. Herausgegeben von Lazarus und Steinthal (the last volume in conjunction with U. Jahn). (20 vols., 1860–1890.)

Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde. Herausgegeben von K. Weinhold. Neue Folge der Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft. (1891 ff.)

Folklore Record; since 1883 under the title *Folklore Journal.*

Published by the English Folklore Society; the other miscellaneous publications of this society also possess considerable value.

There are also serial publications of *traditions populaires* in France, which need not be enumerated here.

Of medieval literature important for the study of folklore we possess, from the thirteenth century: Gervasius of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia;* Cæsarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum;* Jacobus a Voragine, *Legenda Aurea;* and, somewhat less important, the so-called *Gesta Romanorum.* The *Zimmersche Chronik*, of the sixteenth century, likewise contains a wealth of material. Popular law, the so-called *Weistümer*, usages and sayings that Jacob Grimm utilized for his *Rechtsalterthümer*, the *Sachsenspiegel* of the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the *Schwabenspiegel* also contain material of this character.

GRUNDTVIG, S. — Danmarks gamle Folkeviser. (5 vols., Kopenhagen, 1853–1890.)

As a collection of popular songs equalled only by the following work of Child.

CHILD, F. J. — English and Scottish Popular Ballads. (5 vols., Boston, 1882–1898.)

BRAND, J. — Popular Antiquities of Great Britain. (1795; a new edition in three volumes, prepared by H. Ellis, was published in 1882.)

Still valuable as a record of numerous ancient observances.

UHLAND, L. — Schriften zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage. (8 vols.)

An excellent collection of German popular sagas, treated historically, which has hitherto been too little regarded.

(*c*) *Methodology of Folklore and Mythology*

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie. Einleitung.

MANNHARDT, W. — Antike Wald- und Feldkulte. Vorwort.

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Sagen, Märchen, und Lieder der Herzogthümer Schleswig, Holstein, und Lauenburg. Einleitung. (Kiel, 1845.)

The three aforementioned Introductions treat, in wholly different ways, the general question of the use that is to be made of folklore in the study of mythology.

COSQUIN, E. — Contes Populaires de la Lorraine . . . précédés d'un essai sur l'origine et la propagation des contes populaires européens. (2 vols., Paris, 1886.)

CLOUSTON, W. A. — Popular Tales and Fictions, their Migrations and Transformations. (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1887.)

Both Cosquin and Clouston follow in the footsteps of Benfey and attempt to vindicate the Oriental (Indian or Egyptian) origin of the tales.

LINNIG, F. — Deutsche Mythen-Märchen. Beitrag zur Erklärung der Grimmschen Kinder- und Hausmärchen. (Paderborn, 1883.)

An attempt to give a mythological interpretation of a number of Grimm's *Märchen*.

LIEBRECHT, F. — Zur Volkskunde. (Heilbronn, 1879.)

HAHN, J. G. VON. — Sagwissenschaftliche Studien. (Jena, 1876.)

—— Griechische und albanesische Märchen. (Leipzig, 1864.)

Of special importance on account of its tabular representations of *Märchen- und Sagformeln.*

COX, G. W. — An Introduction to the Science of Comparative Mythology and Folklore. (London, 1881.)

Now antiquated.

COX, M. R. — An Introduction to Folklore. (London, 1895.)

An outline.

GOMME, G. L. — The Handbook of Folklore. Publications of the Folklore Society for 1887.

More succinct and trustworthy than the book of M. R. Cox.

MEYER, E. H. — Deutsche Volkskunde. (Strassburg, 1898.)

Deals in large part with material differing in kind from that of the books mentioned previously.

WUTTKE, A. — Der deutsche Volksaberglaube der Gegenwart. (1860; 3d ed., by E. H. Meyer, Berlin, 1900.)

GUDHMUNDSSON, V., and KÅLUND, K. — Sitte. Skandinavische Verhältnisse. PG.², III, 407–479.

A detailed account.

SCHULTZ, A. — Sitte. Deutsch-englische Verhältnisse. PG.², III, 480–492.

Only gives suggestions in regard to the methodology.

MOGK, E. — Die Behandlung der volkstümlichen Sitte der Gegenwart. PG.², III, 493–530.

Indicates the sources in a number of titles.

VIII. DEMONIC BEINGS

(*a*) *Walkyries, Swan-maidens, Norns*

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie⁴, I, 328–362.

Grimm includes these three groups under the rubric *Weise Frauen;* their position is midway between gods and heroes: on the one hand they are descended from gods and elves, on the other they are deified women. Grimm also recognizes the connection between *Norni* and *Walchuriun.*

MANNHARDT, W. — Germanische Mythen. Forschungen. (Berlin, 1858.)

Representative of the first period of Mannhardt's development; he interprets Norns and Walkyries as *Wasserfrauen*, *Wolkenwesen*.

PANZER, F. — Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie, I, 1–210; II, 119–160.

Relates a number of Bavarian legends concerning the "three sisters."

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Walküren. Nordalbingische Studien, I, 210–222.

Explains a large number of names.

GOLTHER, W. — Der Valkyrjenmythus. Studien zur germanischen Sagengeschichte, I. AMA. 1888, pp. 401–438.

The general attitude of the more recent mythologists (Mogk, E. H. Meyer, Golther) has already been characterized under the head of Animism and Folklore, Section VII.

(*b*) *Elves and Dwarfs*

There is a great diversity of opinion among scholars as to the origin and character of elves and dwarfs. They are sometimes regarded as belonging to the Indo-European primitive period and are identified, etymologically as well, with the *ṛbhú's* of Vedic literature (H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 235, 1894, "ce qui n'avance pas à grand chose," as A. Barth rightly remarks in his noteworthy review of that book in the *Journal des Savants*, 1896). Skilled dwarfs are met with everywhere, inside as well as outside of Indo-European territory, and neither these general parallels of folklore nor the numerous definitely localized conceptions can be held to represent the common heritage of a family of peoples. Nor is the other view admissible, according to which elves and dwarfs represent historical reminiscences of earlier populations that have long ago disappeared, an opinion which, while not advocated by Jacob Grimm, was still referred to by him in passing (DM.[4], III, 131, and *Irische Elfenmärchen*, p. lxvii), and which is also met with elsewhere now and then (*e.g.* D. McRitchie, *Testimony of Tradition*, London, 1890). Recent mythologists regard elves and dwarfs as souls and demons, now emphasizing the former (Mogk), then the latter (E. H. Meyer), side. It is doubtless true that there are instances in which elves stand in relationship both with the souls of the dead and with the more delicate, silently working forces of nature; and yet we must not, with E. H. Meyer and Laistner, regard all accounts of the imprisonment, marriage, deliverance, and flight of elves as symbolizing ever anew the mythical union of the *Wolkenfrau* with the *Gewitteralb*. Nor is it admissible, whenever elves stand in relationship to natural phenomena, to assume forthwith "seelischen Ursprung" (Mogk, Golther), whether it be derived from the wind or from the worship of water, — the latter either because wells are conceived of as the gates through which souls and spirits issue forth from mountain and earth (Mogk), or because water calls to mind the souls of those who

have been drowned (Golther). Elves and dwarfs are beings that have largely been developed by free popular fancy and cannot be explained on the basis of either animism or myths of nature.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie[4], I, 363–428.

WOLF, J. W. — Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie, II, 228, 349.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.[2], III, 285–298.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 159–177.

Paragraphs 175–177 deal with the evidence for elf cult.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 122–158.

For the rôles that elves and dwarfs play in popular tales the collections, more especially, of Asbjörnsen and Moe (Norway), of Thiele (Denmark), and of Vernaleken (Austria) should be consulted.

KIRK, R. — The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies. (1691; new edition by A. Lang, Bibliothèque de Carabas, Vol. VIII, London, 1893.)

Gives a description of the mode of life of elves and dwarfs; still very readable, although superseded by the essay of the Grimms mentioned below.

GRIMM, JACOB, and WILHELM. — Irische Elfenmärchen. Einleitung. (Leipzig, 1826.)

The body of the book is a translation of an English original entitled *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland.*

MANNHARDT, W. — Roggenwolf und Roggenhund. (Danzig, 1865.)

—— Die Korndämonen. (Berlin, 1868.)

(*c*) *Giants*

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie, I, 429–462.

Represents the giants as a race that has perished or is perishing, who are endowed with the strength, innocence, and wisdom of an earlier age (p. 438). Grimm also attaches considerable importance to correspondences between designations for giants and names of peoples; thus he compares *jǫtunn* with *Jute*, *thurs* with *Etruscan*, *hûne* with *Hun.*

SIMROCK, K. — Handbuch der deutsche Mythologie. *Passim.*

MAURER, K. — Die Bekehrung des norwegischen Stammes zum Christenthume, II, 11–17.

Both Simrock and Maurer see in the giants a proof of an original or secondarily developed dualism of Teutonic religion; the classical treatise on this subject is the work of Weinhold mentioned below.

WEINHOLD, K. — Die Riesen des germanischen Mythus. SWA. XXVI, 225–306 (1858).

The giants are the oldest race of gods; Weinhold treats them under the rubrics water giants, air giants, fire giants, and earth giants.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, §§ 178–211.

Regards the giants as demons of nature, thunder, storm, and cloud, and also of fog, night, and the subterranean world; they are, like the elves, the prototypes of gods and heroes.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 298–312.

The giants are demons of nature, not deposed gods; Mogk divides them into water giants, wind giants, and mountain giants.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 159–191.

Golther treats them under three heads: water giants, wind and weather giants, mountain and forest giants.

IX. COSMOGONY. ESCHATOLOGY

DARMESTETER, J. — Les Cosmogonies Aryennes. Essais Orientaux. (Paris, 1883.)

Represents, like the book of Rydberg below, a standpoint now entirely antiquated, viz. that the cosmogony and eschatology are part of the common inheritance of the Indo-European peoples.

RYDBERG, V. — Undersökningar i germanisk Mythologi, Vol. II.

Gives an excellent collection of material.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie, pp. 463–482, 659–688, 700–713.

Grimm's treatment is rather discursive; Chapter 19 deals with the Creation; 25 with Time and the World; 27 with Death. Besides the fragmentary German evidences, Grimm also gives most of the details of the Norse system, which, strictly speaking, lies outside of the plan of his work. Many of his observations under this head are unprofitable; some, more especially those on macrocosm and microcosm, have even caused considerable confusion in the study of mythology.

PETERSEN, N. M. — Nordisk Mythologi, §§ 1–36, 79–82. (2d ed., Kopenhagen, 1863.)

Both Petersen and Simrock (see the next title) have made the Norse cosmogony and eschatology the framework of their entire treatment of Teutonic mythology.

SIMROCK, K. — Handbuch der deutschen Mythologie, §§ 6–53.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 376–383.

Like all recent mythologists, Mogk regards the cosmogony and eschatology as the creation of the later artificial Norse mythology; he accordingly treats it more or less in the form of an appendix.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 501–543.

Golther's treatment is somewhat more detailed than that of Mogk; he has collected the available data from the German heroic saga, and while he does not accept the cosmogony and eschatology as representing genuine popular belief, he yet extols them as "a fitting climax to the history of Teutonic religion."

MEYER, E. H. — Völuspa. (Berlin, 1889.)

—— Die eddische Kosmogonie. (Freiburg, 1891.)

Meyer has attempted at great length to prove the foreign origin of these doctrines; he traces them to Christian dogmas and the apocalypses. In the last combat he sees the struggle between Christ and Eliah reflected. Compare the unfavorable reviews by Kauffmann, ZfdPh. XXV, 399–402, and by Chantepie de la Saussaye, VMAA. 1892, pp. 336–364.

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde, Bd. V.

Contains Müllenhoff's commentary on *Völuspa*, which, notwithstanding all the labor of the school of Bugge-Meyer, has as yet lost none of its value and authority.

YGGDRASIL

MAGNUSEN, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexicon, pp. 588–598.

Regards it as an "universæ naturæ emblema"; the tree in the temple at Upsala described by Adam of Bremen is a copy of it, as, in fact, Nyerup had already recognized. The *Irminsäulen* of the Saxons are also to be connected with the world-tree, as is also maintained by Jacob Grimm.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie⁴, II, 664–667.

Grimm suggests a connection with the tree of the cross, but here the Norse world-tree is the original, features of which have been transferred to the cross. Grimm's very sensible utterance on this subject is the following: "The attempts that have been made to explain Yggdrasil do not concern me."

MANNHARDT. — Baumkultus der Germanen, pp. 54–58.

Mannhardt's starting point is that of guardian trees for houses and villages; the world accordingly also has its guardian tree (*vårdträd*), and the tree at Upsala is therefore the prototype and not a copy of the world-tree.

BUGGE, S. — Studien über die Entstehung der nordischen Götter- und Heldensagen, deutsch von O. Brenner, pp. 421–561.

A detailed study of the subject; Yggdrasil, the steed of Odhin, is the gallows on which Odhin hung — to the same effect Gering in his note on *Hávamál*, 138 — and is an imitation of Christ on the cross.

MEYER, E. H. — Germanische Mythologie, § 112.

Meyer's conclusions are even more fantastic than those of Bugge; he discovers everything imaginable in the world-tree: the cross, the river of Paradise, the Jordan, the cedar of Assyria of Ezekiel, scenes from apocalyptic writers, from Lactantius, Honorius of Autun, and fables of Phædrus.

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Deutsche Altertumskunde, V, 16, 103–106.

Adam of Bremen's description of the tree at Upsala — "Near that temple there is a very large tree that spreads out its branches far and wide, and is ever green, in winter and summer alike; no one knows what kind of a tree it is. In the same place there is also a fountain . . ." — Müllenhoff finds reflected feature by feature in the world-tree. The tree is tended by Mimir, Odhin's friend; it is supported, therefore, by water and sun, *i.e.* Odhin's eye.

BLIND, K. — The Teutonic Tree of Existence. *Fraser's Magazine*, January, 1877, pp. 101–117.

An extreme example of wild combinations; Blind compares Hindu, Persian, and Semitic trees, and declares Yggdrasil to be a profound symbol of life and the world.

FALK, H. — Martianus Capella og den nordiske Mytologi. AfnO. 1891, pp. 266–300.

Falk traces some of the animals on the world-tree to Martianus Capella; his observations are of some interest.

WESSELOFSKY, A. — AfsPh. XIII, 149.

Cites a parallel from the Slavic world: "In certain Slavic Christmas songs a tree appears as tree of the cross, and likewise as world tree, with a falcon in the top, bees or otters in the middle, and a snake at the root." Something similar occurs in a Roman lamentation for the dead. In the main Wesselofsky upholds the views of Bugge.

MAGNÚSSON, E. — Odin's Horse Yggdrasill. (London, 1895.)

A valuable essay; Yggdrasil is identical with Odhin's horse Sleipnir, *i.e.* the wind which rustles through the trees.

GOLTHER, W. — Germanische Mythologie, pp. 527–531.

Concurs in the main with the views of Bugge; the tree is a copy of the cross.

MOGK, E. — Mythologie. PG.², III, 379–380.

Gives a sober and scholarly survey of the material.

X. CULT

(*a*) *Calendar and Festivals*

MAGNUSEN, F. — Priscæ Veterum Borealium Mythologiæ Lexikon, pp. 727–852.

Gives a "specimen calendarii gentilis veterum Gothorum, Danorum aut Scandinavorum ex Asia oriundi, ductu carminis Grimneriani ac antiquissimarum reipublicæ islandicæ legum breviter adumbratum." The whole is an ill-digested compilation with the most arbitrary astronomical mythological observations.

NORK, F. — Der Festkalender. Das Kloster, Bd. VII. (Stuttgart, 1847.)

Not greatly superior to Magnusen; treats primarily the Christian rather than the pagan calendar.

GRIMM, JACOB. — Geschichte der deutschen Sprache, Chapter 6. Feste und Monate.

—— Deutsche Mythologie⁴, II, 613–658.

Grimm was again the first to call attention to important data.

WEINHOLD, K. — Über die deutsche Jahrtheilung. (Kiel, 1862.)

—— Die deutschen Monatsnamen. (Halle, 1869.)

—— Altnordisches Leben, pp. 372–383.

The essays of Weinhold are the best we possess on the subject.

Considerable material may also be found in books on folklore, in the works of Brand, Mannhardt, Pfannenschmidt, U. Jahn, etc. The following deserve special mention:

REIMANN, F. A. — Deutsche Volksfeste im neunzehnten Jahrhundert. (Weimar, 1839.)

One of the few older works that is still of importance.

CASSEL, P. — Weihnachten. (Berlin, 1862.)

WEINHOLD, K. — Weihnacht-Spiele und Lieder aus Süddeutschland und Schlesien, mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen. (Neue Ausgabe, Wien, 1875.)

USENER, H. — Das Weihnachtsfest. Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen, Bd. I. (Bonn, 1889.)

TILLE, A. — Yule and Christmas. Their Place in the Germanic Year. (London, 1899.)

(*b*) *Magic and Divination*

GRIMM, JACOB. — Deutsche Mythologie, Chapters 34–38, pp. 861–1044.

The various chapters are entitled: *Zauber; Aberglaube; Krankheiten; Kräuter und Steine; Sprüche und Segen.* The material under these heads is very full.

BERGH, L. PH. C. VAN DEN. — Proeve van een kritisch Woordenboek der nederlandsche Mythologie. (Utrecht, 1846.)

Especially important for the subjects magic, magic agencies, and charms; see the headings *Tooverij*, *Toovermiddelen*, *Tooverspreuken.*

MÜLLENHOFF, K. — Zur Runenlehre. (Halle, 1852.)

WEINHOLD, K. — Die altdeutschen Verwünschungsformeln. SBA. 1895, pp. 667–703.

UHLAND, L. — Wett- und Wunschlieder. Schriften, III, 181–382.

JÓNSSON, F. — Um galdra, seidh, seidhmenn og völur. Thrjár ritgjördhir tileinkadhar Páli Melsted. (1892.)

Compare K. Maurer, ZfV. III, 101.

HOMEYER, K. G. — Über das germanische Loosen. Monatsberichte der Berliner Akademie, 1853, pp. 747–774.

CHRISTENSEN, C. V. — Baareprøven, dens Historie og Stilling i Fortidens Rets- og Naturopfattelse. (Kopenhagen, 1900.)

Advocates the Keltic origin of the *cruentatio*, which did not reach German territory until the thirteenth century; its origin is primarily to be explained as a natural phenomenon, not as an ordeal.

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